

CABINET PORTRAITS

SKETCHES OF STATESMEN



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TO

CHARLES RUSSELL and ROBERT DONALD

IN MEMORY OF

THE DAYS WHEN THESE SKETCHES WERE WRITTEN

AND OF THEIR UNFAILING KINDNESS

TO THE WRITER

PREFACE.

THE SKETCHES of some of the Leading Statesmen of our day contained in this volume were originally published in 1869-70 in a monthly magazine. They are now re-published with such alterations, modifications and additions, as time and the riper views of the writer have made necessary. Since they were originally written two of the Statesmen who are criticised have passed away, but their names are so fresh in the recollection of their countrymen that the writer has not hesitated to retain the sketches in this volume.

It ought to be noted that, whatever literary merit these essays may have, the author claims for them such value as may attach to unprejudiced criticisms, based upon a close personal observation of the public life of the men criticised. Himself a

political partisan, the writer has striven to the utmost to divest himself of all partisanship in these pages, and to write of the public men who now adorn English political life, with as little reference as possible to any party questions. He has endeavoured, in fact, to be thoroughly impartial. It is for others to say how far he has succeeded.

THATCHED HOUSE CLUB:

July 1872.

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CABINET PORTRAITS.

MR. DISRAELI.

NO ONE can doubt that among the political studies presented to us by the statesmen of the present generation, there is none more interesting, none more puzzling, than that afforded by the character of Mr. Disraeli. There was very sound truth in the sketch in which Mr. Tenniel, adopting Mr. Poynter's fine picture, represented the Conservative leader in the character of the Sphinx. How ready we all are to speak lightly of Mr. Disraeli—lightly to praise as well as to censure him. But, after all, it is not so easy as some of us imagine to sum up his character in an epigram, to dismiss him with a shallow sneer, or to satisfy ourselves—supposing we are sound Conservatives—by plastering him from head to foot with party laudation. Many of the most acute and able modern critics have owned themselves puzzled and beaten when they have been dealing with Mr. Disraeli. Volumes might be, and assuredly will be, filled with criticisms of his character and career.

From the day when he filled an uncongenial post in a solicitor's office; from the day when he wrote novels and satires which did something more than

amuse society, which added new treasures to the literature of his country ; from the day when he was one of that gay throng of wits and fops of which he is now, alas ! almost the last man left to us ;—Mr. Disraeli's life has been one that deserves and will unquestionably receive the study and the criticism of future generations. He was a man of mark before he entered Parliament ; he had *made* himself a man of mark, he—the obscure son of a man of the middle class, fore-doomed to the drudgery of conveyancing—was looked upon as a successful novelist and social critic, at a time when the great rival who has pressed him so hard throughout his political career, was still a youth at Oxford. His whole life is a tempting theme to dwell upon, but the limits of these pages afford no opportunity of giving way to the temptation ; and though when diamonds are photographed little but the flaws are shown, we must try in this brief sketch to reproduce something of the light and the brilliancy, the depth and the splendour of this 'diamond of the first water,' with whom we have to deal. His past career is a part of English history, and to the historian we must leave it ; our duty is simply to draw the ex-Premier of England as you may see him to-day in the House of Commons.

A man of middle height, of spare but well-proportioned frame, of scrupulous neatness of dress, and possessed of a countenance which no one can forget who has once looked upon it—this is Mr. Disraeli, as we see him now quietly walking up the floor of the House to his place on the front Opposition bench. Arrived at his seat he removes his hat—he alone amongst the gentlemen upon that bench—and sits

down, folding his arms, and stretching out his legs in a fashion which recalls bygone days, when out of every twenty honourable gentlemen in the House, nineteen of them stretched out their legs in exactly the same way.

Over the high arched forehead—surely the forehead of a poet?—there hangs from the crown of the head a single curl of dark hair, a curl which you cannot look at without feeling a touch of pathos in your inmost heart, for it is the only thing about the worn and silent man reminding you of the brilliant youth of ‘Vivian Grey.’ The face below this solitary lock is deeply marked with the furrows left by care’s ploughshare; the fine dark eyes look downwards, the mouth is closed with a firmness that says more for this man’s tenacity of will than pages of eulogy would do; but what strikes you more than anything else is the utter lack of expression upon the countenance. No one looking at the face, though but for a moment, could fall into the error of supposing that expression and intelligence are not there; they are there, but in concealment.

Much is said of the power possessed by Napoleon the Third of hiding his thoughts from the keenest scrutiny; but more than once even his power over his countenance has been sorely taxed, and he has been glad of the grateful shelter of the curling moustache that shades his mouth. Without any such help, however, Mr. Disraeli has a face that is simply inscrutable. Again and again have hundreds of keen eyes been turned at critical moments towards that face, to read, if it might be possible, something of the thoughts of the man himself; but never once, not

even in the most exciting crisis of personal or political conflict, has the face unwittingly relaxed, or friend or foe been able to read aught there. It is the face of a sphynx, inscrutable and unfathomable; it is, as men of every party will admit, the most remarkable face in England.

We have dwelt thus long upon it, because by its very absence of outward expression, it gives a clue to the general character of the man himself. It is not for us to attempt to sound the depths of his soul. They are beyond the reach of our plummet, nay, of any plummet that has yet been dropped into them. There have been many men—a few friends, a vast number of foes—who have imagined that they have dived down into the innermost recesses of Mr. Disraeli's nature, and who have come to the surface again, to tell us about everything that they saw there, to explain every hidden motive, each smothered passion, and to reduce the man himself to a mere piece of mechanism—an automaton chess-player—whose motive power, and springs, and wheels, and wires, are to be discovered by anyone who will take the trouble to look for them. We intend to be guilty of no such folly.

Mr. Disraeli's mind is no more to be analysed than his countenance is to be fathomed. He is here; we know what he has done, we have seen his labours, we acknowledge his genius, we believe him to be intellectually one of the greatest men not of his own time only but of all English history. Beyond that we cannot go, and we must leave to future critics, who will see him through a clearer medium than that through which it is possible for us to behold him, and who may have new lights thrown upon his character

which are withheld from us, to decide what he is, and what precisely is the motive power of his life. All that we know at present is that he is an intellectual prodigy, and like other prodigies he must be tried by exceptional rules and standards. But this has nothing to do with the mere sketch which we propose to attempt of the man himself, of the place he holds in the House of Commons, of the work he does there, and of the qualities he displays in doing it.

He is a great party leader. That is beyond dispute. To him belongs the honour of having, with an exquisite tact and skill, led the House of Commons, when he had only a minority of supporters at his back, and of having led it in such a way that the most watchful of foes were unable to trip him up, or even to change the secretly-formed purpose of his mind. Those who saw him first as Chancellor of the Exchequer, then as Prime Minister during the last Conservative Administration, leading his party and the House of Commons at the same time, witnessed a spectacle, the like of which has perhaps never been seen before ; for we have no previous record of such generalship as that which Mr. Disraeli then displayed.

The writer, when watching him during that eventful period, was curiously enough constantly reminded of a line in Cowper's well-known hymn, for if ever a man seemed to 'ride upon the storm' of party politics, to be above it, and superior to its fury, it was Mr. Disraeli. Once and again there was mutiny in the ranks of his own party : as a minister he could have cried with the Psalmist against his own familiar friend in whom he trusted ; opposite to him was a foe bent upon mischief, superior in numbers, and led by

a man who, with many great and noble qualities of his own, has never once during a long career been betrayed into the weakness of an act savouring of tenderness towards his brilliant rival. From this man Mr. Disraeli had to look for nothing but the most uncompromising and relentless opposition—and he knew it. He was himself engaged in a task which, to the most sanguine of his own followers, had but a short time before seemed an utterly hopeless one, and which, to those of them who were unable to see as far as he did, seemed worse than hopeless—suicidal.

But he went on, in spite of difficulties and discouragements which would have broken the spirit and destroyed the strength of any other party leader of modern times. And he went on with wonderful success. Past rocks and shoals, and quicksands, without number, and by a channel on which it had never before entered, he steered the vessel of the State ; he faced obstacles which seemed insurmountable, and which to any other man would have been what they seemed, and lo ! they vanished away under his marvellous manipulation ; with a party sorely reduced in strength, he kept at bay the overwhelming numbers of the enemy ; nay, he even used them as instruments of his own, and it was by their aid that he passed the great measure which will henceforth be associated with his name, and balked his eager rivals. This is what Mr. Disraeli has accomplished within the last few years ; and no impartial man will deny that it is one of the greatest political achievements recorded in the history of Parliament.

It was during the trying period between 1866-9 that he developed his ripeſt powers. Until he became

leader of the House of Commons on the last occasion, he had never shown his remarkable fitness for such a post. On previous occasions he had done well ; but then he did his work superlatively well. It is true that when he had formerly been leader of the House he had laboured under the disadvantage of having opposed to him the skilled veteran who was the most popular party man ever seated within the walls of Parliament.

But making allowances for the difference in his position which was made by Lord Palmerston's death, we yet cannot doubt that there was a ripening and maturing of his powers during the long interval of opposition through which he passed whilst that nobleman and Lord Russell were at the helm of the State for the last time, which contributed materially to his success when he himself was recalled to the leadership. It was not until he was recalled, that in addition to all his other great qualities, he displayed that geniality and humour which the House of Commons is so quick to appreciate in its leader, and the absence of which in the present Prime Minister it feels so strongly.

It is the parrot cry of those who criticize Mr. Disraeli's character, to say that despite his wonderful genius, he is incapable of appreciating the peculiarities, the weaknesses if you will, of the character of the average English gentleman. What better answer can there be to this charge, so constantly brought against him, than to point to the way in which he has made himself master of the greatest weakness of the House of Commons—its love of a good laugh ? During his Premiership, despite all that there was to worry and

annoy him, he kept the House of Commons in good temper by his constant use of an unflagging and unfailing humour. He put down bores, or he silenced awkward questions, with one of those happy phrases or pleasant jests which Lord Palmerston loved so dearly, and which did so much to smooth the path of that great statesman whilst he was at the head of affairs. It seems a very small thing, this ability to cope successfully with the bores of the House of Commons, but no one who has studied the science of party Government will regard it with contempt.

Mr. Disraeli is perhaps never so happy as when he is putting down one of those terrible children of Parliament who *will* know everything, and who *will* ask their questions, or air their most recently-acquired knowledge at the most inappropriate moment. Who, for instance, has forgotten the way in which he met Mr. Darby Griffith, when that hon. gentleman had put a question which looked like 'a poser?' Amongst the bores Mr. Griffith is, or rather was, *facile princeps*; and at times, by the very perseverance of his boring, he has wormed some secrets out of unwilling Governments. But when Mr. Disraeli, instead of giving him the information for which he asked, got up, and in that airy off-hand manner that sits so well upon him, congratulated the member for Devizes upon the possession of a 'luminous intellect,' the House was so delighted with the saying that it gave the Minister full liberty to sit down, and leave Mr. Griffith to digest the unexpected compliment—if he could.

And somewhat akin to this humour is that higher power of sarcasm for which Mr. Disraeli has been famous throughout his whole public life. He is not, in

one sense of the word, a good debater. It cannot be denied that at times he contrasts unfavourably with Mr. Gladstone. But upon some subjects he makes speeches which are far above the level reached by any other man in the House of Commons. No one has the power of investing a great political event with more of the interest attaching to domestic affairs than he has. Over and over again he has brought down incidents, which were so far above the ordinary level of the House of Commons as to be beyond the reach of its sympathy, to the region of every-day life; as, for instance, in the case of Mr. Lincoln's assassination, when he made *the* speech of all the speeches made the world over upon that most terrible and most touching of tragedies, and brought tears into the eyes of men to whom before that moment the President of the United States had been a mere abstraction.

But whilst upon such topics he is a perfect master of words and ideas, when he is speaking upon the mere party question of the hour, he often fails to produce that impression upon his audience which one would expect from a man of his genius. No doubt many causes unite to produce this effect. Chief amongst them, we believe, is the fact that he has not the passion of the ordinary party man. The range of his sympathies is so Catholic, that his mind is seldom roused to passion upon a question which is only a question of party; it is not until he is really touched by one of those few topics which have power to move him deeply, that the fire of genius in his soul pours forth its sparks, and that he shows all the depths of passion and enthusiasm hidden within him. And yet even when he is in his coldest mood, what an intellec-

tual treat it is to listen to him speaking upon one of the great questions of the day.

A few years ago 'The Times' contemptuously spoke of his speech on the Irish Church Bill—in opposing it upon the second reading—as 'flimsy covered with spangles.' That may have been the impression produced upon the gentleman who wrote 'The Times' leader, but at any rate we can bear testimony to the fact that it was not the impression produced upon the House of Commons. In making the speech in question, Mr. Disraeli laboured under many disadvantages—disadvantages so obvious that we need not recur to them—yet his speech was one which drew shouts of applause from those who had least sympathy with the cause on behalf of which he was pleading. From beginning to end it sparkled—with 'spangles,' if it pleases 'The Times' to say so—but at any rate with spangles the brilliancy of which dazzled the beholders, and roused new admiration within them for the speaker.

We have made the fullest allowance for a fact, which is obvious to those who have studied Mr. Disraeli's career in the House of Commons—the fact, namely, that upon many party questions, he is not so successful in the effect he produces by his speeches as might be expected; but no one will deny that the speeches themselves are amongst the most remarkable specimens of parliamentary eloquence which the present generation has witnessed. Their cleverness is unsurpassed.

And even the most jealous of rivals, or the most censorious of critics, will be ready to admit that in sarcasm and in wit he is also unapproached by any politician of the present day. We said that his sar-

casm was akin to the humour he shows in putting down bores. It is, indeed, a humorous rather than a venomous sarcasm, bringing smiles even to the faces of those who are wincing under its shafts.

No one can watch him upon an occasion on which his sarcastic powers are evoked, without being lost in admiration at the skill he displays. He flings about his wonderfully polished epigrams with the careless grace of an Eastern magician flinging knives at one of his confederates—with this difference, however, that whereas the magician always misses, he always hits. He meets a whole broadside of invective with a single thrust of his rapier-like wit, and lo! his opponent is laid prostrate on the ground. He compliments Mr. Beresford Hope, when that gentleman is most emphatic in denouncing him, upon ‘the Batavian grace’ of his style; he remarks parenthetically, after the most cutting onslaught of Lord Salisbury, that ‘the noble lord’s invective possesses vigour, but it has one defect—it lacks finish;’ he sends Mr. Goldwin Smith to roam over the world labelled ‘an itinerant spouter of stale sedition;’ he shuts the mouth of a noisy and demonstrative assailant like Mr. Sergeant Dowse by a passing allusion to his ‘jovial profligacy;’ and amongst the leaders of the Liberal party there is not one who has not been made the subject of a happy epigram, polished to the fineness of a needle, which at the time it was tossed across the House with an airy, graceful indifference, never failed to reach its mark, and to strike home. Nor is it only in meeting assailants that he deals in epigrams. The National Debt is ‘a mere flea-bite;’ the Derby is ‘the blue riband of the turf;’ nay, there are a hundred happy phrases now in every-day use

amongst us, for which we are indebted to the leader of the Opposition.

‘But,’ say the critics, ‘we admit all this; we acknowledge that he is the greatest living master of parliamentary fence; that from the days when he met and overcame O’Connell, he has had no rival in epigrammatic wit, in a brilliant, showy cleverness of style, or in party generalship; he is all this, but he has never shown that he is a statesman in the true sense of the word.’ Has he not? It is certainly no intention of ours to enter into a defence of Mr. Disraeli’s political career, or to become his partizans; nevertheless, the absurdity of these sneers at his ability as a statesman renders it necessary that they should be exposed.

There is but one instance which need be quoted to show that he *does* possess in a very high degree the foresight and the accuracy of judgment which are necessary to make a man a really great statesman. Need we say that we allude to the question of the American war. Upon that topic we were nearly all in the wrong—all but Mr. Disraeli. Lord Palmerston—clever, experienced, worldly-wise old man as he was—would have gone in unhesitatingly for a recognition of the Southern States. Earl Russell declared that we saw in the new world that which we had so often seen in the old—a war on the one side for empire, and on the other side for independence. Mr. Gladstone was bursting with zeal—even when official restraints ought to have tied his tongue—on behalf of Mr. Davis, and ‘the nation’ he had made.

Mr. Disraeli was in Opposition, and therefore at liberty to act entirely in accordance with his own sym-
pa-

thies ; his party were almost to a man the enthusiastic adherents of the South. It would have seemed, to an ordinarily acute person, that the safest and most profitable game he could possibly have played would have been that of the Confederacy. But Mr. Disraeli himself knew better. A cool judgment and a clear foresight had led him to see the inevitable end. He was beyond his own party, beyond his colleagues, beyond his rivals, in the prescience which enabled him to see what the results of the American war would be ; and whilst we believe that this statesmanlike sagacity did much to save England at the time from immeasurable evils, we cannot but deplore the fact that those who are put forward as his superiors in statesmanship did not in this instance show that they possessed it in something like the same degree. Had they done so, we should not now have had an ' American difficulty ' to contend with.

Of Mr. Disraeli's personal qualities, apart from those which he displays as a debater, a party leader, or a statesman, this is not the place in which to say much. Nevertheless, it is bare justice to a man who has been the subject of a severer and more merciless criticism than any of his contemporaries, to point to one or two of the most prominent traits of his private character. Watching him in his public career, he always strikes one as a man of singular reserve ; a man having few confidential friends, and seldom indulging in free intercourse even with his immediate colleagues.

The popular impression of him, indeed, is that he is a man without friends, labouring alone, and holding himself aloof from those who are his natural allies.

We believe this impression is an entirely mistaken one. It is at any rate certain that, personally, Mr. Disraeli is one of the most popular men in the House of Commons, winning upon politicians of all shades of opinion by his never-failing courtesy, by his generosity towards those who are beginning their political career, and by the utter absence of anything like personal vanity in his character. Nor is it unworthy of remark that towards Mr. Gladstone he has always shown a degree of personal esteem, and of actual generosity, which has never been requited by the latter as fully as we could have wished.

What the reason of this apparent want of generosity on Mr. Gladstone's part may be, it is difficult to tell. Assuredly Mr. Gladstone is not as a rule cold or ungenerous towards his rivals or opponents, but there is in his bearing towards Mr. Disraeli an unquestionable coldness, which has often puzzled those who know him best. To us it seems in some degree to be accounted for by the fact that the Prime Minister entertains some doubt as to the sincerity of Mr. Disraeli's convictions.

But if that be so, his conduct is, to say the least, inconsistent. There are other men whose convictions are much more open to suspicion than Mr. Disraeli's, towards whom he shows none of this coldness. How high the personal feud between these two great statesmen has sometimes risen, will be remembered by those who can recall one memorable occasion when Mr. Disraeli congratulated himself on the fact that the ponderous table of the House separated and in a measure protected him from his rival. Yet it is bare justice to Mr. Gladstone to recall another occa-

sion when Mr. Disraeli under, as it then appeared, the imminent pressure of a severe domestic affliction, was manifestly touched by the feeling and delicacy with which his great opponent alluded to his position. We only wish that such displays of mutual good feeling were more common than they are.

The great Conservative leader is a poet as well as a statesman. In the lightness of his fancy, in the depth of his feeling for the sufferings of others, in the Catholicity of his sympathies, in his fine imaginative powers, and in his ability to invest the homeliest of topics with something of romance and of beauty, he gives proof of the pure vein of poetry hidden somewhere in his nature.

Of his faults a great deal might easily be said. Some of them have already been indicated in these pages, indeed, and there are others which are patent to everybody. Marvellous dexterity in manipulating a question, and wonderful skill in seizing every advantage offered by the enemy, though they make a man a great party leader, do not necessarily make him a great statesman. We believe, as we have already said, that Mr. Disraeli has the faculty of statesmanship in a very high degree ; but it is nevertheless manifest that he has at times shown rather too strong a bias in favour of expediency, and has sacrificed what his party believed to be great principles in order to secure for them a temporary advantage. But it is always open to dispute whether he was not perfectly justified in taking the course he followed on such occasions. We have not yet reached the end of the political history of England, and a good many very acute Liberals are inclined to the belief that Mr.

Disraeli's Reform Bill, for instance, instead of destroying the Conservative party, saved it from destruction, and opened out for it a new career. Time only can solve this question ; but whilst it remains in doubt it is unfair to regard it as finally settled against Mr. Disraeli ; and on the question of the practical capacity as a party leader which Mr. Disraeli displayed in this transaction, there cannot be even the shadow of a doubt. It is true, again, that his powers as a speaker are sometimes marred by what we may call a falsetto tone of sentiment, and that whilst he has the power of making, at times, speeches which captivate all who hear him, there are other occasions when he fails to produce such an impression as might be expected upon his audience. But whilst we own these things, we must still admit that he has played a great part in the history of the country, and on the whole has played it well ; whilst, as for his personal career, his struggle from comparative poverty and obscurity to the greatest height which it is possible for a subject to attain, and the qualities which, during that struggle, he has displayed, his resolution and endurance in defeat, his generosity and moderation in victory—these are things for which every man must feel the most genuine sympathy and admiration, whose sympathy and admiration are worth possessing. His career is a romance ; but it is a romance that teaches a thousand useful and noble lessons, and that will have power in times when the party passions of to-day shall be cold as the ashes of those by whom they are fanned, to fire many a young soul with the highest ambition, and to fill many a tender heart with the sympathy for him whose story it records, and who is not now appreciated as he deserves to be.



MR. GLADSTONE.

NO ONE who looks at the Treasury Bench of the House of Commons during this present period can labour under a moment's doubt as to the identity of the leading spirit of the Government—the man who has given his name to the administration. The eye passes in a moment over the mediocrities of the ministry—the Fortescues, and Bruces, and Goschens—passes over the two really great men who sit there beside the Prime Minister, and rests instinctively upon the face of Mr. Gladstone. And it is a face well worth looking at; especially is it worth regarding with attention when contrasted with that other countenance, to be seen on the opposite side of the table of the House. Mr. Gladstone's face differs strangely from that of his great rival. It is the most mobile and expressive countenance in the House of Commons; it can no more conceal the thoughts flitting through the brain behind it than the mirror can refuse to reflect the figure placed before it; it is incapable of reserve or of mystery; hope, fear, anxiety, exultation, anger, pleasure, each of these in turn is 'writ large' upon it, so that the spectator watching it closely can read in it, as in a book, the varying thoughts and feelings of him to whom it belongs.

~~And~~ the face is in the highest degree characteristic

of the man. There never was a statesman more impulsive than the present Prime Minister ; never one who took less pains to hide the workings of his mind from those around him, or who was more determined to wear his heart upon his sleeve. His openness in this respect is at once his fault and his virtue. It is an error in any man to whom are committed great destinies, and the policy of a mighty nation, and we cannot wonder that his critics should often have complained of it. But it has at the same time redeemed not a few of the mistakes and inconsistencies of his career, and has given the world evidence of the fact that, however impulsive and at times imprudent he may be, he is at least thoroughly sincere, even in his most impulsive actions.

Into his past career it is unnecessary that we should go, any more than into that of Mr. Disraeli. Both men are part of history ; indeed, more than any other two men of their time, have they 'made history' for the present generation. And, possibly, having brought them into juxtaposition, and having endeavoured in some measure to show what Mr. Disraeli is in certain respects, the simplest way of dealing with Mr. Gladstone would be to make the broad declaration that he is the very opposite of his rival. That is, indeed, a sweeping generalisation, and yet it has more of truth in it than such generalisations commonly have. For there never were two men, rivals in Parliament, or we might almost say, in any profession, who presented a greater contrast to each other, than do these two. In character, in early training, in manner, in their virtues, in their faults, they are curiously unlike each other ; and yet their careers have been singularly parallel.

Let us see in what Mr. Gladstone differs from Mr. Disraeli. We said Mr. Disraeli was a great party leader. To party leadership, in the ordinary acceptance of the term, Mr. Gladstone can lay no claim. Even at this moment, when he has had several years' experience of leadership in the House of Commons, and when he is weighted with the first post under the Crown, the members of his own party tremble from time to time at the course he is taking, and fear lest any sudden eccentricity on his part should overthrow the coach in which they are all seated. This is to be accounted for in a variety of ways; for a proof of the truth of the statement, however, we need only point to the disastrous results of his leadership in 1866 and 1867, when, under his guidance, the 'great Liberal party' degenerated, according to the confession of one of the most acute of their own number, into 'a rabble.' No one knows how soon it may be before a similar spectacle of rapid demoralisation and disintegration is again witnessed.

How is it that it is so? We have said that many ways of accounting for this lamentable weakness are to be found. Mr. Gladstone has many of the best qualities of a great leader. Like Mr. Disraeli, he can inspire on the part of his followers a high degree of personal enthusiasm. Out of doors he has a still greater command over the popular feeling than Mr. Disraeli; nor is that fact to be accounted for by any question of politics. For whilst Mr. Disraeli's qualities, however much they may be admired by cultivated men of all political opinions, are 'caviare to the general,' Mr. Gladstone's are essentially popular. He has the passion, the enthusiasm, the fluency of speech, the ap-

parent simplicity of action which are so dearly loved by the multitude. His name can be made a tower of strength for his party ; it might be adopted as the watchword or the rallying cry of a nation.

But in the House of Commons he finds the task of leading a majority one which is almost beyond his grasp, and in which he is only saved from the most serious blunders by the watchfulness of friends and colleagues. Partly, this is unquestionably due to the fact that he is incapable of making any allowances for the weaknesses of his fellow-creatures. He has great strength of his own ; his soul when he is engaged on any question of importance, is filled with an earnestness which is almost heroic, and he sees only one road to the end at which he aims—the shortest. Under these circumstances he is incapable of understanding how any of his followers, who share his creed, and profess to be anxious to reach the same goal as himself, can demur to the path which he is taking. For their individual crotchets he makes no allowances, and he is especially regardless of the unwillingness of the English gentleman to be driven in any particular direction.

It is curious to see as the result of this, how much needless irritation he succeeds at times in causing amongst his followers. Over and over again the Liberal clubs have rung with complaints of his overbearing manner, of his ‘temper’—it ought, rather, to be ‘temperament’—of his want of consideration for the ideas, the foibles, the prejudices of the rank and file of his party. The general result is, that he makes a bad leader. Indeed, it would be safer to say, that he does not lead at all, in the common sense of

the word ; others lead for him. He has another weakness, which is strangely irritating, not perhaps to the majority, but at any rate to a very considerable minority of his followers ; we mean his abhorrence of such a thing as humour. He makes jests, himself, at times, and occasionally they are good ones ; but they are grim and ponderous jokes, such as one might expect to circle round the board of a funeral feast rather than in any livelier assemblage, and the fierceness of manner with which they are delivered, and the supernatural solemnity of his countenance, as he makes them, render it necessary that the man who ventures to laugh at them should have a bold heart. As to such a thing as humour in others he cannot see it. More than once when the House has been convulsed with laughter, at some exquisite bit of 'chaff'—to use a slang phrase—on the part of Mr. Disraeli, he has risen, and in the most grave and emphatic manner replied seriously to the lively sarcasm of his foe.

Then there is his 'temper.' We hear a great deal—as it seems to us a great deal more than we ought to hear—about 'Gladstone's temper.' Even Liberal journals and Liberal members are fond of dwelling upon his hasty temper, and it seems to be taken for granted that the Prime Minister is one of those peevish and passionate men who make life a misery to those around them. The clubs dwell with much emphasis upon his arrogance and his domineering disposition ; and every little outburst of strong feeling which he displays is spoken of as though it were nothing more than that very contemptible thing—a fit of anger. As we have already said, it ought, it appears to us, to be Mr. Gladstone's temperament

rather than his temper that should be held accountable for these occasional outbursts of which so much is made by those around him. That he is one of those finely-strung men of very tender susceptibilities, to whom the prick of a pain is more torture than the heaviest of downright blows, is certain. Equally certain is it that he has a will of enormous strength—Lord Salisbury has spoken of it in Parliament as an ‘arrogant will,’ and it is undoubtedly in the Cabinet a dominant will—that he holds in a very considerable degree the doctrine that the end justifies the means, and that he is in the heat of debate the victim of an impetuosity which sometimes hurries him into false positions, from which he is generally too proud to retreat afterwards.

But against these serious failings of temperament must be set the enthusiasm which is also a part of his nature, and which, when he has really worked himself up to boiling-point on a great question, he can always communicate to his followers; and the resolution which enables him to persevere with any work he has undertaken, in the face of difficulties which would overwhelm most men.

As a minister in charge of a great measure, one to which he has devoted the whole strength of his wonderful mind, he has not an equal. One has only to look at the difference between the manner in which such a bill as the Army Regulation Bill of 1871, was conducted in the House of Commons, and that in which the Irish Land Bill was managed, in order to be fully satisfied upon this point. When Mr. Gladstone gives himself with all his earnestness—and he is the most earnest man now living in

England—to a great public question, he shows a knowledge, an ability, a power in handling it, a grasp at once of the greatest principles and of the smallest details, a readiness to comprehend the objections raised to particular provisions of the bill, a fertility of resources in providing remedies for those objections, which no other English statesman can pretend to possess.

Despite his admitted failure as a party leader, a failure due chiefly to his lack of the elements which ought to enter so largely into the character of such a man, he is certainly unsurpassed and possibly unapproached in the power of framing a great legislative measure on a vexed and intricate question like that of the Irish Land Laws, and in the skill with which he handles every part of it, down to the minutest and most insignificant detail.

As a debater he stands without a rival in the House of Commons. Mr. Disraeli possesses a brilliant wit, and powers of sarcasm to which he can lay no claim ; but no one who has seen Mr. Gladstone take his part in a great party battle will question his superiority as a debater to any of his rivals or colleagues. He is never seen to so much advantage as when at the close of a long discussion, he rises in the midst of a crowded House impatient for the division, to reply to Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Hardy. The readiness with which he replies to a speech just delivered is amazing ; he will take up, one after another, the arguments of his opponent, and examine them and debate them with as much precision and fluency as though he had spent weeks in the preparation of his answer. Then, too, at such moments time is precious, and he is com-

pelled to repress that tendency to prolixity, which is one of his greatest faults as an orator. His sentences, instead of wandering on interminably, are short and clear, and from beginning to end of the speech there is hardly a word which seems unnecessary.

The excitement, too, which prevails around him, always infects him strongly; his pale face twitches, his magnificent voice quivers, his body sways from side to side as he pours forth argument, pleading and invective, strangely intermingled. The storm of cheers and counter-cheers rages around him, as it can rage nowhere except in the House of Commons on such an occasion, but high and clear above the tumult rings out his voice, like the trumpet sounding through the din of the battle-field. As he draws to a close something like a calm comes over the scene, and upon both sides men listen eagerly to his words, anxious to catch each sentence of his peroration, always delivered with an artistic care which only one other member of Parliament can equal, and seldom failing to impress the House with its beauty. Then it is that his great powers are seen to the fullest advantage—voice, and accent, and gesture, all giving force and life to the words which he utters.

And having upon such an occasion seen him in the most favourable light, let the reader go into the House of Commons during the 'question hour,' set apart for the torture of ministers, if he wishes to see how very different an appearance he can make under other circumstances. The art of answering questions is by no means to be despised by a Cabinet Minister; but of all the great ministers we have had in recent

times, Mr. Gladstone has the least knowledge of that art. His great fault is that he does not know when to stop. Having in reply to some troublesome questioner, made what seems to be an explicit declaration of his intentions, instead of sitting down as Mr. Disraeli would do under similar circumstances, he proceeds forthwith to explain, at interminable length, the alternative courses open to him, the reasons why none of those courses was suitable, and the arguments in favour of that which he has decided to adopt. On and still on he goes, with an unbroken fluency, and with a command of language which is marvellous, until a shade of weariness steals over the faces of his colleagues on the Treasury Bench, and hon. gentlemen opposite unceremoniously show that they have heard enough by entering into a brisk conversation with each other. Some one, however, is watching him, and presently, as he glibly makes a statement upon a matter of fact, that some one, whoever he may be, gives him a direct contradiction. An angry frown instantly mantles upon the brows of the Premier; he hesitates, pauses, whispers a word to one of his trusty lieutenants at his side, and then possibly is compelled to make a material modification in his original statement. These inaccuracies of his in matters of detail are of too frequent occurrence, and are so notorious, that one or two men have openly declared him to be 'constitutionally incapable of speaking the truth.' This, of course, is a charge which no sensible person would for a moment believe in. Mr. Gladstone has, we are convinced, a most profound and genuine reverence for the truth as the truth; nevertheless, it cannot be denied that from

carelessness, or some other cause, he is occasionally led into serious mis-statements, even of the simplest facts.

And this failing is the less excusable inasmuch as there is no one in the whole kingdom who, as a public speaker, has a command over facts, figures, or small matters of detail at all to be compared to his. The budget speeches which, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he has from time to time delivered, are so famous that we need merely refer to them. No one who heard any of those speeches, will forget the Chancellor's marvellous command over the regiments of figures he had to lay before the House; his knowledge of the smallest details of his financial scheme; and the wonderful art and skill which laid down the whole plan in its proper proportions, giving no undue prominence to one part, and showing no unmerited neglect towards another. Mr. Gladstone walks amongst figures like a king amongst his subjects; he plays with them like a juggler with his balls. Something of his capacity in this respect he showed in the great speech in which he introduced the Irish Church Bill to the House of Commons. For three hours did that speech flow on without interruption; it was long enough to have filled a goodly-sized volume, and yet from first to last the Premier had each one of his countless figures and facts in its proper place; and never halted or stumbled for a moment whilst performing his tremendous task. Mr. Lowe is a man of great and original genius; yet when men gathered together a few nights afterwards to hear him introduce the budget, the contrast which his speech presented to Mr. Glad-

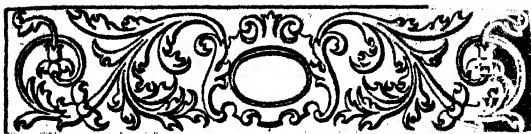
stone's was so great as to be ludicrous. As financial minister the member for Greenwich has never had an equal.

We have spoken very freely of Mr. Gladstone's faults. As we said of Mr. Disraeli, in photographing a diamond it is the flaws which come out most prominently. That Mr. Gladstone, who is one of the very few really great men of the present generation, has serious failings and infirmities of temperament and of mental character, cannot be denied.

But he is great in spite of these. His personal generosity to all men around him—with the single exception we have mentioned in writing 'of Mr. Disraeli; his fidelity to his colleagues; the earnestness with which he throws himself into any cause which enlists his sympathy, and the perfect sincerity with which he acts up to what he holds to be right, are traits which cannot be forgotten in estimating his character. There is no man now, despite the slanders with which he has from time to time been freely bespattered, who does not entertain a feeling of respect—in numberless cases it amounts to reverence—for his personal qualities. It is curious to note how, High Churchman though he is believed to be, even Mr. Miall accepts him as his leader with something like enthusiasm; and will go out of his way to exclude him expressly from the censures which he passes upon Mr. Forster. Against the virtues, and the intellectual capacity which have made him what he is, must be set those faults of impetuosity, at times amounting to rashness, and of a will which is ill able to brook opposition, at which we have hinted. Not always wise or discreet, and often needlessly sensitive,

he is one of those great men who have not a little of the woman in their nature. This is the cause of much of the weakness of his character ; but, even with this alloy, it is a singularly great and noble character, and deserves the admiration which it excites.





LORD DERBY.

IT is no easy task to decide the position which Lord Derby holds in the political world. He is a Conservative, and he has proved his fidelity to his party at a heavy cost to himself; but he enjoys almost as much of the respect and esteem of Liberals as of Conservatives, and on three successive occasions he has been asked to take high office under a Whig premier. He stands alone therefore; a party-man and yet not a party-man.

In one, and not the worst sense of the word, he is a partisan. He has a political creed, and holding the leading points of that creed in common with many other persons, he acts with those persons with a uniform loyalty and fidelity. In this respect he differs greatly from not a few men, who in other matters bear some resemblance to him. Lord Grey, for instance, has an independence of character and a clearness of judgment not unlike those which distinguish Lord Derby; but Lord Grey never seems so happy as when he is inflicting some injury upon the party to which he nominally belongs. The Marquis of Salisbury, allied to his high principles and broad statesmanlike ideas, has an impatience of party discipline, which, at times, interferes seriously with his public usefulness.

Lord Derby holds views as statesmanlike as either of these noblemen ; is even more completely free from the trammels of mere party prejudices ; and is at least as fearless in expressing his opinions ; but he can at the same time be the loyal and faithful lieutenant of his chief. He accepts the system of party government under which England is ruled. The result is that whilst he is regarded on one side of the House of Commons with affectionate confidence, he enjoys the esteem and respect of all men upon the other side.

There are some persons, indeed, who look upon him as the keystone of the political arch—that which gives strength and unity to the whole fabric, and which belongs equally to either side of the structure. But as Lord Derby—who is after all better able to form an opinion on the point than anybody else—tells us that he is a Conservative, and as the whole tenour of his life bears out that assertion, we see no reason for doubting where to place him. The Liberals have often claimed him as one of themselves ; but they have yet to make out a case in support of their claim which will be really conclusive.

Whilst in one respect, however, he is a party man, there is a sense in which it may be said that he belongs to no party. He has never given up to party talents meant for mankind ; he has never allowed those party prejudices and passions, to which almost all men are liable, to blind his vision or to warp his judgment ; he has never, we believe, made a speech in or out of the House of Commons, which was *only* a party speech, and that is more than can be said of any other living politician.

Something, no doubt, of his peculiar position in the political world, is due to his temperament. No one who has seen Lord Derby, or heard him speak, would be likely to fall into the error of conceiving that, under any circumstances, he could be swayed by violent passions.

His temperament is phlegmatic to a degree very rare in England ; in his mode of speech—the slow, deliberate utterance of carefully-weighed words—he shows that he possesses above all things the judicial mind ; and in the passionless but (at the same time) dignified manner which constantly distinguishes him, he proves that he is above the reach of the lighter emotions which have so much influence upon the minds of more ordinary men. It makes no matter upon what subject he is speaking ; it may be one of the most abstract description, or it may be a question upon which the fate of a government depends ; he always deals with it in such a manner as to give you the idea of a judge pronouncing a decision, rather than of a cabinet minister making a speech in Parliament. He might almost be described as the moderator of that distinguished assembly.

Throughout his whole career in Parliament it has been his lot to see each question as it has presented itself, almost too clearly, if such a thing be possible. His keen, sagacious mind has detected in a moment the flaws in each successive cause or argument submitted to the House ; has seen exactly where the cause was unworthy of support, or where the argument failed in its logical sequence, and has come to a conclusion on the one or the other, in almost every case different from that arrived at by anybody else.

This to a certain extent is a misfortune ; for there never yet was a cause or an argument against which something could not be alleged ; and if all mankind possessed the critical faculty to the same extent as Lord Derby, the world would be in anything but an enviable plight. But happily, in this case, the keen discernment is combined with the judicial sagacity.

Lord Derby does not simply pick holes in the argument submitted to him : he sees at a glance its weak points, and then deliberately weighing it as a whole, he pronounces his opinion upon it. The result is that though many persons may dislike the opinion when it is given, and though from special circumstances it might be difficult or impossible to carry it into effect, its value is beyond question, and is acknowledged alike by those who agree with and those who differ from it. Thus the noble lord has come to be an authority upon almost every matter with which he deals ; and his personal opinion carries with it an amount of influence with people of all classes which can hardly be said to be enjoyed by that of any other statesman of the day.

It was a happy lot which made him when in office the recognised head of a department in which above all other things this passionless, judicial tone of mind is required. In the ordinary work of politics too much of this element is a misfortune. England is ruled by party government, and were a man to be the representative of the government in a department in which strictly party questions were constantly being raised, he would sooner or later inevitably come to grief if he were to weigh every question

judicially, and to shut out of his view altogether the requirements of party—which, in this country, are often the requirements of the nation also.

But there is one department of the State into which no such considerations can fairly be said to enter, but in which, as a rule, the English people trust a minister, not because he is a Liberal or a Conservative, but because he is an Englishman. And this is the department which has been allotted to Lord Derby. How admirably he has conducted the foreign affairs of the country there is no need for us to tell. By common consent he has been placed first among the foreign ministers of the day. The absence alike of passion and of prejudice from the character is just what is needed by an honourable diplomatist. The man who has to conduct the dealings of a country with neighbouring States, should, above all other things, be able to comprehend the views taken by those with whom he has to deal, as well as the views of those for whom he is acting. He must, especially in the case of an English foreign minister, be able at all times to see his own country, with its failings and weaknesses, as others see it. We believe there is no English statesman who can do this so well as Lord Derby.

The day of a blustering foreign policy has gone by. It died out when Lord Palmerston gave up the seals of the Foreign Office, and it is never likely to be revived. Still more remote is the day of a Machiavellian foreign policy. We cannot hope, at any rate for some time to come, to attain the post-prandial frankness of the diplomacy which Mr. Reverdy Johnson tried to inaugurate; but we will never consent

to return to the old days of double-dealing, bribery and corruption, in which the cleverest knave was invariably the winner. We have begun to have some dim preception of the fact that nations must deal together upon the same principles as individuals, and that in each case mutual honour, honesty and courtesy, are the chief requisites. But as yet we are not free from the influence of the old traditions and the old prejudices, nor have we learnt to recognise the altered status of England amongst the nations of the world.

We need, therefore, a foreign minister, who, in this respect, is ahead of us, or rather above us; one who can take a line of action not because it is the line which his predecessors took before him, or that which is most popular with the country, but because a careful, and as far as possible, an impartial consideration of the question, convinces him that this and this only is the right line to take. Here, then, comes the need for the judicial frame of mind, and here it is that Lord Derby's qualities are specially valuable.

At the Foreign Office, when he held the seals, he has found once and again old and complicated questions, Gordian knots of red-tape and foolscap, which needed to be cut by just such a clear intellect as he possesses. Each has been taken in hand by him in turn, and most have been satisfactorily dealt with. Even in the unfortunate dispute with the United States, he effected a settlement so far as it was competent for the English minister to do so. The question was afterwards re-opened, not because of any failure on Lord Derby's part, but simply because the American people did not know their own

minds, or were at the mercy of rash and unscrupulous demagogues.

The calm and dignified demeanour which distinguishes Lord Derby is an additional qualification on his part for the Foreign Secretaryship. It is especially the demeanour which should characterise England so long as she adheres to the policy of non-intervention; and the contrast which it presents to the mischievous fussiness of Lord Russell is as happy as it is marked. There was, we believe, no Englishman of any party, who did not feel thankful when the foreign affairs of the country were in the hand of Lord Stanley, or who did not regret deeply his removal from the department which he had made specially his own.

Lord Granville and he may be said to run together as the alternate chiefs of the Foreign Office. The former has more of the *suaviter in modo*, the diplomatic finish and politeness, than the latter; but it is somewhat singular, that whilst amongst Conservatives no Liberal is more popular than Lord Granville, amongst Liberals there is no Conservative who enjoys their esteem in so high a degree as Lord Derby. So strongly was his fitness for the post of Foreign Secretary acknowledged on all sides when he held office, that it was said that if the whole country could have been polled on the subject, the universal vote would have been in favour of his appointment as permanent Secretary of State.

Those, however, who would have most reason to object to such a proposal would be the Conservatives themselves. Lord Derby's value to his party is very great—far greater, we believe, than many Conserva-

tives feel it to be. Living in the midst of changes, the rapidity of which is hardly to be paralleled by anything that has occurred previously in times of peace, the Conservatives of the present day have special need of the peculiar sagacity which distinguishes Lord Derby, and it would be a great misfortune were they to be separated from him by such an event as that at which we have hinted.

There is little reason to apprehend the possibility of such an event coming to pass. Lord Derby, although he often advances views which must be startling and somewhat disquieting to many of his political allies, has never slackened in his affection for his party ; and those who dream that he will, at an early period, sever himself from the Conservatives, are not likely to see their hopes realised.

His Conservatism is not a passion ; it is something entirely distinct from that Conservatism which comes to a man as an inheritance, or which he adopts as the result of accidental circumstances. He has manifestly accepted the Conservative banner as that under which he will fight ; because, as the result of mature and unprejudiced deliberation, it appears to him to be that which is most entitled to his support. He sees the faults of his friends quite as clearly as the faults of his opponents, but he has made up his mind that Conservatism is better than Liberalism, and we may be sure that when such a man does make up his mind on a point like this, he is in no hurry to alter it. For our part, we expect him to remain what he now is. It is hardly possible for him to become anything else, indeed.

Of the many admirable traits of his private character,

of the philanthropy which so constantly distinguishes him and which has displayed itself in so many ways, of his high appreciation of modern culture, and his intense respect for all intellectual pursuits—a respect by no means common amongst practical politicians—we have left little space in which to speak. These things show, however, that his mind is not absorbed in State-craft, but that he takes a very lively and a very kindly interest in the smaller affairs of the world. There is no social movement which has right and reason on its side, that need look to Lord Derby for aid in vain. It is true that he applies to social affairs the same critical and deliberate judgment he employs in weighing political questions ; but when he has once convinced himself of the merits of any particular cause, he becomes, not its enthusiastic, but its sober, yet earnest and unchanging friend.

Lord Derby's tall figure and well-shaped head make him a noticeable man amongst the throng of members in the lobby of the House. He has a sedate yet resolute and dignified appearance, that is completely in keeping with his character ; and his speeches, clear, cogent, and logical, are, apart altogether from their intrinsic merits, by no means the least successful of parliamentary orations. He speaks, however, very seldom ; much less, indeed, than his friends could desire ; but he never speaks on any subject he does not thoroughly understand, and never expresses an opinion that he has not most carefully and deliberately considered. The speeches he does make possess a distinctive value which can hardly be said to attach to those of any other member of the House of Lords.



MR. LOWE.

THE present Chancellor of the Exchequer is 'perhaps the most remarkable man,' to quote the Pogram phrase, in the House of Commons. His individuality is intense. His independence is unapproached. His very person bears no resemblance to that of any other man in the House, whilst his career is absolutely without a parallel. Like Lord Cairns and Mr. Disraeli, however, he furnishes another example of the ease with which 'mere intellect' can assert itself against the most disadvantageous circumstances. When he left England in 1842, he took with him to the Antipodes nothing but the reputation of having been a highly successful private tutor at Oxford. When he returned in 1850, dark stories came home with him of his having been known as 'the most quarrelsome man in the new world.' That was all Fame had then to say of a man who is now, beyond all question, one of the foremost statesmen of his day. It is needless, under these circumstances, to say that the Right Honourable Robert Lowe is pre-eminently a man of genius.

No one who has ever spent an afternoon in the lobby, or an evening in the House of Commons, can be unacquainted with his physical characteristics. His big, burly figure, precisely the figure one associates

with Farmer Brown and the ownership of fields of growing wheat ; his purplish-pink face, redeemed from the charge of a common-place vulgarity by a forehead which has a massive grandeur of the rarest kind ; his silvery white hair, that has been white from his birth ; his weak eyes perpetually blinking and hiding themselves from the light of the sun ; the short, quick step with which he walks ; the uneasy roll of his great head upon his shoulders, calling to mind a similar performance to be seen any day at the bear-pit of the Zoological Gardens ; the harsh but not unpleasant voice, which it seems impossible to raise above the level of conversation ; the nervous little laugh which ever and anon bursts from his throat ; once seen or heard, these things can never be forgotten.

And looking at Mr. Lowe now-a-days, it is hard to conceive how men could ever have failed to read the signs of an extraordinary and original genius in his personal appearance, and in the little tricks and weaknesses of manner which we have indicated. For in this strange, uncouth man, who, as he walks the streets, is perpetually singing or talking softly to himself ; who always appears to be living in another world to that in which those around him move ; and who at times appears to be altogether oblivious to the commonplace events passing before his eyes, nothing is so remarkable as the impression of power which he produces upon those who study his appearance. He has the head and frame of a Roman emperor, and the painter who wanted a model for a portrait of Nero could hardly do better than copy the likeness of the Member for the University of London.

Mr. Lowe began his career in Parliament with some advantages. He had only been two years at home when he secured a seat as the representative of Kidderminster ; but he was already known as one of the principal leader-writers on the staff of 'The Times,' and when he rose to make his maiden speech, men crowded into the House to listen to one who was reported to be the real wielder of the thunder of Printing-house Square.

At the very outset he succeeded. There was something so strikingly original in his manner that it was hailed as an agreeable diversion to the monotony of the ordinary parliamentary style ; whilst as for the substance of his speech, he showed an acute and powerful intellect, wedded to a lively and picturesque imagination. He was a success, and before long he was the occupant of a somewhat humble post in the administration. It was then that his troubles, and the troubles of other people, began.

From his first entrance upon office, men found in Mr. Lowe the most uncompromising and independent of officials. Not until 1863, however, did the irritation which he everywhere aroused rise to the dimensions of a storm. At that time he filled the office of Vice-President of the Council, and the clamour against him was terrific. For he had shown himself a man who knew no such thing as expediency ; who recognised no possibility of anybody being right who differed from himself ; and who displayed a disregard of the ordinary amenities of political life hardly to be expected in one who was a Member of Parliament, a Privy Councillor, and an official of some years' standing.

In 1864 he was compelled to succumb to the storm. He resigned his place, and withdrew to the back benches. If he could not make his power felt in one way, however, he was determined that it should be felt in another, and returning to his old occupation, he threw into the leading columns of 'The Times' that originality and vigour of which he is the master. The common rumour of the time declared that the ex-Minister of Education, whose shortness of sight is so great as to approach blindness, would often go down to 'The Times' office of an evening, and dictate two 'leaders' in quick succession to an amanuensis—a feat which perhaps nobody but a leader-writer can properly appreciate.

Men who knew Mr. Lowe assured each other during this period that he was 'biding his time,' and those who knew him well felt certain that he was not likely either to forgive or to forget the conduct of those who had abandoned him to the storm. It was not until the Reform debates of 1866, however, that he took up his true position in the House of Commons. Little need be said here of the part which he took in that famous struggle, for it must be still fresh in the memories of all. Some time before, on the occasion of Mr. Baines's annual motion on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, Mr. Lowe had announced himself, in a speech of the most remarkable character, resolutely opposed to any lowering of the franchise; he had declared his belief that to increase the constituencies would be to admit to them the elements of venality and corruption, and with almost prophetic power he had warned the country against the advance of democracy. When, therefore, Lord Russell's Government

undertook the task of bringing in a Reform Bill, Mr. Lowe was ready to give his unyielding opposition to the party with which he had formerly acted.

It is not our purpose to be uncharitable, or to make any insinuations as to the motives which led a man who had at one time been not unfavourable to constitutional reforms, suddenly to assume an attitude of the fiercest hostility towards any movement of the kind. There was a 'third party' in the House, on the subject of Reform. Men believed that third party to be much more powerful than it was, and it seemed not unlikely that it might even become the leading power in Parliament. But it wanted a chief, and for a time it seemed as though this want was not likely to be supplied. Suddenly, however, Mr. Lowe placed himself at the head of the middle party, and became at once one of the most powerful enemies the administration had to contend against. How well he fought on the side which he had taken let contemporary records declare. No other proof of his success is required than the fact that he was mobbed in New Palace Yard, and denounced in unmeasured language by Mr. Bright and his supporters at every one of the 'reform demonstrations' of the period.

The speeches which he delivered during the course of the struggle in the House of Commons, and which more than anything else have made his reputation and secured for him the great post that he now occupies, were undoubtedly the most memorable contributions to the parliamentary oratory of the day. The keen, incisive, deadly wit; the subtle irony, the vast scholarship, and the amazing fertility of illustration they displayed, raised them to a level with

the greatest efforts which the House of Commons had ever witnessed. It is but a few years ago, and there is therefore no need to recall the way in which men talked of them in the House itself, at the clubs, in society, and all over the country. The orator became something more than a conspicuous member of Parliament; all at once he found himself the 'lion' of the season. In the House of Commons he was cheered enthusiastically by a majority of the members; he found himself the head and the mouth-piece of a party, and there is reason to believe that he entertained flattering hopes of the most ambitious kind. Out of doors 'society' regarded him as its saviour, and his admirers declared that he alone amongst statesmen was able to stem the tide of democracy.

And yet the speeches which made him famous and powerful, were hardly—in one sense of the word—orations at all. They were rather essays of profound learning and wonderful power, carefully prepared in the study, and then recited in the popular chamber.

The manner in which they were delivered presented a strange contrast to that of the recognised orators in the House. These remarkable speeches, listened to with breathless attention by the most brilliant assemblage that could be gathered together within the limits of the United Kingdom, and afterwards eagerly studied and discussed, were uttered in a slipshod, conversational style, having no pretence to oratorical elegance or force. The words of the speaker flowed from his lips with a rapidity which only made his occasional stumbling and hesitation more conspicuous; his witticisms were spoiled by the

little laugh—half of conceit, half of nervousness—which accompanied them, and men almost lost their breath in trying to keep up with his tremendous pace when he was engaged upon the more difficult parts of his argument.

It was curious, indeed, to watch him whilst he was making one of these speeches of historical importance. Action, in the common sense of the term, he had none. He stood at his seat below the gangway like some stout, country squire, generally with his hands clasped behind his back, and rolling forth his words and sentences with no effort to impress any of them upon his hearers. They were left to study the speech and detect its points for themselves, and to many of them this was a task almost beyond their power.

The reward for which Mr. Lowe looked as the result of these efforts escaped him. He was not accepted as indispensable to the existence of the ministry. On the contrary, the ministry recognised the fact that even its own existence was not indispensable to the welfare of the State, and by resigning left in Mr. Disraeli's hands the task which it had itself been unable to accomplish. Possibly it was because of the lesson which he had thus been taught that Mr. Lowe henceforward modified his tone. He has accepted the inevitable ; but even now he holds himself ready to become, whenever it may be necessary, the champion of the constitution—provided always that the constitution can reward him adequately for his championship.

Although, however, for the time-being Mr. Lowe lost the prize for which he had been working, his

turn came when the Liberal party took office under Mr. Gladstone. Then, indeed, it was acknowledged that the Ministry could not do without him ; that his power of 'making things awkward' if left out in the cold, was too great to be disregarded ; and he received accordingly a post which it might well be supposed would have satisfied his ambition, but which the rumour of the day declared did not fulfil all his hopes.

As a minister holding high office under the Crown, his success has been anything but remarkable. Indeed, when we remember that he is undoubtedly a man of great and original genius, we must admit that his official career so far has been almost a failure. As Chancellor of the Exchequer he has splendid opportunities of making a substantial name for himself ; but as yet those opportunities have passed by unseized. The budget speech of his first year was a melancholy failure—a failure due, perhaps, in great part to his own physical infirmities—but the budget itself, though decidedly clever, was tricky and unsubstantial ; and it did nothing to give him permanent fame.

Of the budget of 1871 nothing need be said. Its most earnest opponent was 'The Times,' and nowhere was it more unpopular than on the Liberal benches. Its withdrawal, and the substitution of an increased income tax for the proposals it contained, showed that within the Cabinet as well as without there were men who did not accept Mr. Lowe as a master of finance, and who had therefore no difficulty in abandoning his scheme to the storm when it burst upon it.

An aggressive self-conceit is one of the most prominent traits of his character. In his personal intercourse with those around him he shows a sense of his own superiority, and a belief in his own abilities, surprising in a man who has so many really great qualities. His utter contempt, too, for his antagonists; the sneering indifference with which he meets their arguments, and the positive brutality with which he treats their pet theories or amiable weaknesses, are amongst the darker shades in his character which cannot be passed by in a faithful portrait. The clearness of his own vision does not lead him to show any charity towards those who cannot see as far as himself; whilst the unflinching independence of his mind deprives him of any respect for the most tenderly cherished prejudices of other people.

Cool, fearless, and resolute, he is even now pursuing his career in Parliament for his own ends. Those who are at present his colleagues, and who have faith both in his abilities and in the strength of his Liberal principles, will do well to remember that his abilities have never been so successful as when they were employed on his own behalf; and that his 'principles' are capable sometimes of being developed in very unexpected directions. If nobody else in England believes in it, Mr. Lowe at least has unshaken faith in the coming of the day which shall see him First Minister of the Crown.

There hardly ever was a case of a great statesman who was personally so unpopular as the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We do not refer to his unpopularity during the Reform agitation, for that was

to a great extent the result of circumstances, but to the absolute dislike entertained for him by a majority of his colleagues, of his party, and of the public. In some measure this no doubt arises from the fear of the inferior for a superior who is pitiless in his superiority ; but it is also to be attributed to the strange lack of common courtesy which he sometimes exhibits in dealing with those around him.

The officials who are brought in contact with him, the deputations who go to him with complaints or petitions, the Members of Parliament who venture to come athwart his course, all are made to feel, in the most unpleasant manner, the hard angular independence of his mind. Whether he will ever soften down into a more amiable type of humanity, is doubtful ; but unless he should do so, it is hard to believe that he will be able to realise his own ambition, and become the permanent head of an influential party. No one will question his greatness as a statesman ; but how much of his statesmanship is given to his country, and how much is kept in reserve for his own benefit, is not to be determined as yet, by anyone who attempts to analyse his character.





MR. HARDY.

THE Right Honourable Gathorne Hardy is an excellent example of the best type of the constitutional minister. Despite the large part which Mr. Hardy has taken in politics of late years, and the eminent position which he holds as a debater in the House of Commons, it is as a minister of the Crown rather than as a politician that he will be best remembered.

And although in this country the mere politician, the man who can take a prominent part in a great debate, or who can manoeuvre the division lists, holds a place in public esteem far beyond that to which he is entitled, it is surely impossible that anyone can be so blind as to place the politician before the minister—the man who rides upon the storm of party strife before the man who administers the laws of his country, and serves in the most direct manner both the Crown and the people. Mr. Hardy has played the latter part with such marked success, that we repeat our belief that it is as a minister rather than as a political leader that he will hereafter be chiefly remembered.

For the people, though they are too often forgetful and ungrateful, have, as a rule, a thorough knowledge of the difference between bad government and good government, and are by no means wanting in grati-

tude towards those at whose hands they receive the latter. Should Mr. Hardy never again take office—not a likely supposition—he will undoubtedly live in the grateful remembrance of his countrymen as the best Home Secretary whom this generation has seen.

And to be even a passably good Home Secretary, not to fail egregiously in that office which Mr. Hardy filled with such marked success, is a feat of no ordinary kind. For the Home Secretary has perhaps more difficulties to encounter in the performance of his duties than any other minister of the Crown. Of the importance of his post we need say little. He is first of the five Secretaries of State, taking precedence even of the statesman to whom is entrusted our relations with foreign countries. Virtually he is the ruler of Great Britain; he stands as the representative alike of the Crown and of Parliament in its dealings with the English people. He holds in his hands the prerogative of mercy in the case of every criminal condemned in a court of justice; from the child sentenced to be birched, to the assassin doomed to lose his life. He is held responsible by the popular voice for every one of the failures and indiscretions of every one of the magistrates and judges of the land. He has to maintain order throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain; to advise when the civil forces shall be supplemented and assisted by the military; and to be answerable for all that the troops employed under such circumstances may do. And in addition to all his other duties, he is made the chief constable of the capital, and has to be ready in his place in Parliament to answer the complaints of any querulous nobody

who has found a Member willing to lay his imaginary grievances at the hands of some Metropolitan policeman before that assembly.

Under any circumstances the accumulation of such functions and responsibilities upon a single individual must entail a tremendous strain upon the person who is thus honoured ; but how great must that strain be in England, where with unlimited labours, and almost unlimited responsibility, the power of the minister is strictly circumscribed, and he is often unable to act, not because he does not know how to act, but because the only way open to him is a way upon which our constitution declares he shall not enter !

We need not wonder that the Home Secretary is popularly recognised as the minister who is always in the wrong, and that no inconsiderable portion of that terrible half-hour in which the Government is submitted to the 'torture by question,' is daily devoted to the popular exposition of his countless blunders. For 'blunders' he is always committing in the eyes of somebody, and until fallible man has discovered the art of satisfying everybody, the Secretary of State for the Home Department will continue to be what he now is—the best abused man in England. Every time he remits a sentence of death, the gentlemen who believe that we are 'going to the dogs,' and encouraging murder by the tender-hearted manner in which we administer the laws, will regard him in the light of a personal enemy, if indeed they do not look upon him as the actual accomplice of assassins ; and every time he turns a deaf ear to a petition for mercy, and leaves the law to take its own course, he is reminded by well-meaning philanthropists of the sanctity of

human life, and is even asked by pertinacious religious journals of the Pecksniffian creed, how he expects to 'answer' for those misdeeds of his, when he, too, shall have to give an account of the things done in the body.

And what happens in the case of convicted murderers happens constantly in thousands of less noticeable instances. Does some eccentric justice of the peace in Glamorganshire or Cumberland give a decision which is either bad in law, unnecessarily cruel, or foolishly lenient, the Home Secretary has instantly to choose between the alternative of upholding the sentence and being abused as the ally and champion of chartered wrong, and of reversing the decision and being charged with blindness to the difficulties of those upon whom the administration of the law in remote quarters of the country depends. Truly, though his post is almost imperial in its importance and responsibility, it is, so far as personal comfort is concerned, the least desirable of all the great offices of the State.

But to Mr. Hardy belongs the credit of having filled this office in such a manner as almost to stifle complaint, and that too at a most difficult period in our social history. We do not write as party politicians, and we are not afraid that we shall be challenged in our assertion that the Home Government of England was never managed with more tact, dignity, and discretion than during the time that Mr. Hardy was at the head of the office in Whitehall.

Before he assumed the Home Secretaryship he had shown his abilities as an administrator by the manner in which he had presided over the Poor Law Board,

at a time when the condition of the poor, and especially of the sick poor in the Metropolis, was attracting unusual attention. Those who know anything of the work of the Poor Law Board, now merged in the Local Government Board, know that the President has a task which is only one degree less disagreeable than that devolving upon the Home Secretary.

Nothing can well be more difficult than to deal with the thousands of Unions and Boards of Guardians throughout the kingdom, in each one of which some different type of local prejudice is developed. And when, in addition to these difficulties, there is that of satisfying a suddenly aroused public feeling, shocked by revelations which we would fain believe exaggerated, of the condition of the poor amongst us, the post of President of the Poor Law Board becomes an exceptionally difficult one.

It was at such a crisis as this that Mr. Hardy took office at the head of the Poor Law Board. He was compelled, at a time in every way unfavourable for such an undertaking, to proceed to prompt measures for the reform of the many evils of our workhouse hospitals; and he at once showed how little he had of the official element which is best described as 'red-tapeism,' and how fully alive he was to the necessities of the case, by the manner in which he proceeded. He swept away with a strong hand—and despite opposition and abuse, coming as usual from both sides—many of the worst evils of the existing system, and laid a broad and sure foundation for a state of things more creditable to us as a nation.

Hardly had he completed this task, than he was called upon to assume the head of the Home Office.

There he showed the same qualities of a fearless independence; a clear common sense, an absolute freedom from the trammels of mere routine, and a stern resolution in fulfilling his duties regardless of popular clamour. He showed, too, how easily a man of high principles and strict personal integrity can sink the party politician in the practical minister.

Despite all that we have said as to the way in which the Home Secretary is abused by persons of all classes and parties, we cannot call to mind any single case in which Mr. Hardy was made the subject of a party accusation during his tenure of office, even by the most intemperate of partisans. He had to deal with the miserable, but in some sense the formidable, appearance of Fenianism in England, and friends and foes alike admitted at the time the sagacity, the dignity, and the moderation he showed in meeting and suppressing the various attempts which were made to spread sedition and tumult in Great Britain.

In carrying out the capital sentence upon the murderers of Sergeant Brett, and upon the wretch who brought wholesale death and devastation upon a peaceful district in the midst of London, he did that which entitled him to the personal gratitude of every friend of order in the country; whilst the discreet leniency he showed in every case in which leniency was possible, and the dignified forbearance with which he treated the besotted rabble who forced their way into the Home Office itself, proved how completely free he was, in the execution of his duties, from anything in the shape either of vindictiveness or pettiness of feeling.

Happily, and in a great measure owing to his personal efforts, the Fenian trouble soon passed away, so far as its English development was concerned, and then Mr. Hardy was able to devote his administrative powers to matters which, though they might not be so noticeable, were not less important. Not the least of these affairs was the internal administration of the metropolis; and those of us who remember the peril into which the poor costermongers were brought by one of our Metropolitan Improvement Acts, passed whilst Mr. Hardy was in office, and the promptness with which they were delivered from their danger as soon as the Home Secretary was made aware of it, know that even in those small matters which some persons affect to regard as being beneath the dignity of a statesman, and consequently unworthy of his attention, Mr. Hardy knows not only how to act, but how to act promptly and effectively.

We need not pursue this subject further. Mr. Hardy showed himself, during his term of office, not only a thoroughly useful, but a really great minister—the very type of that special and rare class of men of whom alone good ministers are to be formed under the constitution which we possess—independent in his attitude towards the House of Commons as an honest servant should be, regardless alike of mere party interests and of popular clamour, but thoroughly alive to the growth of public opinion and to the ever-altering necessities of the times in which he lives.

~~It is, however,~~ as the political speaker that he has

won his laurels in the House of Commons. We have given him full credit for his impartiality when in office, but in the House of Commons he is the most ardent of partisans. It was the staunch Conservatism of which he is the exponent—the real ‘old-fashioned’ Conservatism, which has only been modified as far as was necessary to meet the inevitable changes of the times, and of public feeling—that gained for Mr. Hardy the great honour of being chosen member for the University of Oxford in place of Mr. Gladstone.

Here at least was a man upon whose consistency in Conservatism full reliance might be placed—a man who could never be found making terms with Mr. Miall, or indulging in philosophic speculations with respect to the tenure of land or the rights of property! No hair-splitting casuistry, no political or intellectual restlessness, need be feared from Mr. Hardy. A man of good common sense and shrewdness, and with that thorough practical English nature which has so much to do in securing for its owner success in life, he was unquestionably admirably fitted to become the champion and leader of the country gentleman. His views upon some points may be harsh and narrow, but they are essentially the views which the country gentleman holds almost as a part of his religion, and in his faithful allegiance to Mr. Disraeli Mr. Hardy expresses the country gentleman’s fidelity as well as his own.

By the country gentlemen indeed he is regarded with a confidence which is almost enthusiastic, and more than once the world has had occasion to note that he

has spoken in the House of Commons almost directly in their name and as their representative. Few persons can doubt that he is destined ultimately to succeed the chief whose faithful lieutenant he has so long been, and by whose side he has laboured, since he sat in Parliament, with unbroken fidelity.

As a debater Mr. Hardy holds a high place in the House. If he does not stand in the first rank of orators, he is but little beneath it, and he has shown that he is able to cope successfully even with such consummate masters of Parliamentary eloquence as Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. He speaks with a freedom and vigour that give those who hear him a strong sense of his powers; he has a full command of expressive and suitable words; and at times, when under the influence of strong emotion, he can move his audience by the utterance of passages of true and lofty eloquence. But apart from their freshness and their vigour, one of the great charms of his speeches is their evident genuineness. That Mr. Hardy always speaks with a sincerity which is not to be called in question, no one who has heard him can doubt. In his very manner, in the very tones of his voice—full, free, and unreserved—there is something that bears witness to his sincerity, and to the earnestness of his convictions.

In this respect, as in many others, he is eminently fitted to be a popular leader, and whenever the time comes in which his name is adopted as the watchword of a party, we may be sure that he will attract to himself the personal sympathy of his followers to a very marked degree. Hitherto however, it is as

the minister of the Crown rather than as the popular leader that he has been known ; and comparatively short as his public career has yet been, he has already earned the reward of the good and faithful servant, and has proved his claim to be considered as one of the most practical and useful Ministers of our time.





MR. BRIGHT.

‘THE greatest orator of his time’ is the verdict which posterity will unhesitatingly pronounce upon John Bright. Whatever his rank may be as a statesman—and upon that point opinions differ widely—there can be, and there will be no doubt as to his claim to the foremost place amongst those who have given the English House of Commons a reputation for eloquence possessed by no other modern legislative assembly.

Those who have heard him most frequently, and those who are the best able to criticise his oratory, have formed the highest opinion of it. It is something which no words can adequately describe; something which must be felt to be appreciated; but yet something which men of all parties, and of all shades of opinion, regard with an admiration which almost approaches to veneration.

One of the keenest and most skilful Parliamentary critics of the day, a man who constantly opposes Mr. Bright’s views on public policy, and almost scoffs at the idea that he should claim to be a statesman, has likened him as an orator to a Hebrew poet or leader—to a Moses, a David, or an Isaiah—simply because he looks upon him as being all but inspired, when he is giving utterance to one of those mag-

nificent orations which we believe are destined to form part of the deathless literature of our country.

When practical men, of clear, cold common-sense, take such a view as this of Mr. Bright as an orator, and when we know how the members of the House of Commons, accustomed as they are to the eloquence of some of the most eloquent men of our time, will struggle together for the opportunity of hearing him when he speaks, we can have no hesitation in deciding to sketch as far as may be his character as an orator first in this paper.¹

Within the last few years the art of photography has made Mr. Bright's features so well known to his fellow-countrymen, that it is no exaggeration to say that he can go nowhere within the limits of the United Kingdom without being recognised. It has been the lot of the writer to see the Member for Birmingham stared after by every third man he passed in Regent Street on a summer afternoon; surrounded by an admiring but respectful group on the deck of one of the Holyhead and Kingstown steamboats; greeted with enthusiastic cheers when accidentally detected on the platform of a Scotch wayside station; and followed with glances of affectionate pride as he sturdily strode through the crowded Market Street of Manchester, 'the city of his love.'

Wherever he goes, Mr. Bright is upon all hands the object of eager attentions—attentions paid by Conservatives as well as Liberals—and more even than Mr. Disraeli or Mr. Gladstone does he seem to have

¹ It should be observed that these words were written before Mr. Bright's long and melancholy illness. Now, however, that he is happily restored to public life, they may stand without alteration.

a personal interest for the public of the United Kingdom. So far as the lower classes are concerned, this fact is, doubtless, to be explained by the position which he has occupied for years as the 'Tribune of the People;' whilst, in the case of the upper classes, whose sympathies, as a rule, have not by any means been with Mr. Bright, this admiration and respect form a tribute to the wonderful gift which, more than any other man of his generation he possesses, the heaven bestowed gift of eloquence.

A great many men have been from time to time pointed out as the handsomest members of the House of Commons. There is no doubt very great difference of taste in deciding what men are personally handsome and what men are not; and some of those who have enjoyed for a twelvemonth the palm of beauty in our great representative assembly have, in our eyes at least, had no claim whatever to that distinction. It is a pure matter of taste; and we may be altogether in the wrong, yet it seems to us that John Bright is *the* handsomest man in Parliament. His figure, it is true, is heavy and unwieldy; he barely reaches middle height, and of late years he has become very stout; but his broad, yet lofty forehead, firm, clean-cut mouth, and, above all, the wonderfully fine eyes which can flash fire or shed tears at will, seem to us to make up a countenance possessing the highest kind of manly beauty.

Within the last few years a transformation, too, has taken place in his appearance, which has been in one sense a great improvement. Within that period his hair, which was formerly iron-grey, has turned to a pure white, so that now there is something venerable about his

outward aspect—leonine though it is, withal. Perhaps it is in some degree to the charm in the speaker's face, perhaps to his rich and melodious voice, that his hold over his audience is due. These things, however, are but mere accidents. It is by his possession of 'the art of clear and persuasive exposition' that he fascinates those who listen to him, and obtains a command over the feelings of his hearers such as is enjoyed by no other public man of his time.

When a French statesman, conversing with Pitt, expressed his astonishment at the influence of Fox upon the House of Commons, the great Commoner replied, 'Ah, you have not been under the wand of the magician.' And it is only those who have been 'under the wand of the magician' who can fully appreciate and understand 'the marvellous personal power of the man who was for many years regarded by one half of his fellow-countrymen as a mere demagogue, removed but a single degree from the condition of a social outlaw.

We have seen him thrill to tears, or rouse to shouts of applause the like of which we never heard before, a rough Lancashire audience of eight or nine thousand persons, packed within one of the great mills at Rochdale; and in the House of Commons we have heard him speak for an hour at a stretch, whilst every man in the building listened with breathless attention, and the cheers that broke out at the end of every sentence came almost as much from the one side of the House as from the other. Nay, we have watched the faces of the men to whom is committed the government of the British Empire, and of the

'strangers' permitted to join with them, strangers including Princes of the Blood, peers of long descent, the ministers of foreign countries, and the leaders of the Church ; we have watched them, as slowly, word by word, he was rolling forth the magnificent peroration of one of his great speeches, and we have seen upon their countenances such a wrapt, and almost awe-stricken expression, as—to return to the simile we mentioned at the beginning of this sketch—one might have expected to see on the faces of a Hebrew congregation before whom an Isaiah was delivering himself of his heaven-born visions.

We cannot resist the temptation of transcribing this one 'vision' of the Member for Birmingham, which formed the peroration of a speech delivered at Birmingham, in 1862, on the subject of the American War, and the delivery of which will ever dwell in the memories of those who heard it uttered, as one of the most wonderful incidents in their lives. 'The leaders of this revolt,' said he, after speaking for nearly two hours with regard to the war, 'propose this monstrous thing—that over a territory forty times as large as England the blight and curse of slavery shall be for ever perpetuated. I cannot believe, for my part, that such a fate will befall that fair land, stricken though it now is with the ravages of war. I cannot believe that civilisation, in its journey with the sun, will sink into endless night, in order to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who seek to

Wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

I have another and a far brighter vision before my

gaze. It may be but a vision, but I will cherish it. I see one vast confederation stretching from the frozen North in unbroken line to the glowing South, and from the wild billows of the Atlantic westward to the calmer waters of the Pacific main—and I see one people, and one language, and one law, and one faith, and over all that wide continent, the home of freedom, and a refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.'

And yet, whilst the effect produced by Mr. Bright upon those who listen to him is wonderful, the first impression of those who hear him for the first time is one of disappointment. When he begins to speak to any audience, he generally opens his address in a low tone, pauses occasionally, as though to find a suitable word, and seems to have no idea whatever of rousing the enthusiasm of those who listen to him. Those who have taken with them pre-conceived notions of Mr. Bright, presenting him to their imaginations as a reckless demagogue, full of sound and fury, will hardly be able to recognise the great orator in the quiet and unimpassioned speaker who stands motionless before them, pouring forth a stream of noble Saxon words, the very simplicity and appropriateness of which rob the orator of a portion of the credit which is due to him.

But presently, while the stranger is wondering at the infatuation of those who have placed upon the brows of this man the crown of eloquence, he is himself drawn within the circle of his influence, and forgetting his preconceived notions, his subsequent disappointment and his whole theory of the art of oratory, he listens enchanted to the man who can put

the most difficult questions so plainly before his audience, and in whose hands the driest subject becomes so interesting.

Then when the speaker has drawn the whole of his hearers into sympathy with him, he begins to work on their emotions like a skilful player on the harp. And first he rouses the scorn of scorn in their hearts by a few simple words, which, when we read them in the morning, appear altogether innocent, but which, as he utters them, scathe the object of his wrath more terribly than the bitterest or most violent invective. Perhaps in nothing has Mr. Bright so much power as in his use of sarcasm. The manner in which, by a mere inflection of his voice, he can express the intensest scorn, and so express it as to make his feelings more completely known to his audience than if he spent an hour in trying to explain them, is simply marvellous. We remember one or two instances in which the mere tone of his voice has conveyed an impression of his boundless contempt for his adversaries which no language could have expressed half so well.

But almost directly after the audience has been stirred by the orator's sarcasm, he begins in the calmest and most deliberate manner to tell some story. Mr. Bright is a wonderful story-teller, and some of the best anecdotes and illustrations that have been given to us in modern times have come from him. The story of the old gentleman, for instance, who used to say that 'a hole wore longer than a patch,' is worthy of being placed beside the history of Dame Partington; and the old lady who 'felt very badly in her inside,' and the Syrian monk, to whom

'tears were as natural as perspiration,' are good examples of the ready wit with which he supplies every argument he employs with an appropriate illustration.

More notable examples of the same quality are to be found in that speech in which he christened the Adullamites, and added a new phrase—'the Cave'—to the vocabulary of party politics. The speech itself was a triumph of humour, nothing in it being more grotesquely irresistible than that never-to-be forgotten description of the 'party of two,' which bore so striking a resemblance to the young lady's terrier, 'which was so covered with hair that you could not tell which was the head and which was the tail of it.'

Perhaps none of Mr. Bright's qualities does so much to render him popular, as a speaker, both in the House of Commons and in the provinces, as his humour. And one peculiarity of his humour is, that it always appears to be unconscious. When he is telling one of his best stories, or uttering one of his best sayings, he hardly moves a muscle of his face, and seemingly takes no share in the merriment of his audience.

It is almost unfortunate that he draws so many of his illustrations from a book which, in certain circles, is now-a-days going somewhat out of fashion. There are, however, good reasons why Mr. Bright should indulge as sparingly as possible in classical quotations, which, as they reflect discredit upon no one, need not be concealed here. In the course of instruction at the Quaker schools and colleges where he received the whole of his education, no place is

found for the classics. The study of the dead languages is deemed a mere weakness and vanity by the sect of which he is a member, and so it happens that the great English orator has never enjoyed the advantages of reading in the original tongue the masterpieces of his rivals of Greece and Rome. That he has studied them as far as he could possibly do so by the help of translations is evident, and indeed he has himself more than once admitted the value of a classic model.

If the rich stores of classical learning are, however, almost closed to him, he has made excellent use of those other fountains of knowledge which are open to his study. No other public man has such a command of all that is strong, and pure, and noble in the Saxon tongue; whilst few show a greater familiarity with our English classics—with the works of the poets and dramatists of the Elizabethan age, and their successors. All his greater speeches are illustrated by wonderfully apt and appropriate quotations, some from the Scriptures, and some from the standard authors of our country. No one who hears these quotations employed can imagine for a moment that they are the result of a resort to any 'Dictionary of Elegant Extracts,' or other work of the same kind. They show the orator's thorough familiarity with those authors who have done most for English literature. It is said, indeed, that Mr. Bright makes a habit of committing to memory the works of some one of our chief poets every year.

A boundless command of language, at once noble and simple, does not, however, of itself, constitute eloquence. It is in the power to touch the hearts

and win the sympathies of those whom he addresses, that the highest qualities of an orator are shown ; and tried by this standard also, Mr. Bright's success is complete.

We have spoken of the effect he produces at times upon the House of Commons. There is one famous passage in a speech delivered during the course of the Russian War, which literally thrilled the House at the time that it was delivered, stirring to their inmost depths hearts that had no friendly feelings towards the speaker. It is that passage in which, speaking of the probability of bad news from the Crimea, he said—addressing, be it remembered, an assemblage which must have been bound by many and many a tie to the army before Sebastopol—‘I do not suppose that your troops are to be beaten in actual conflict with the foe, or that they will be driven into the sea ; but I am certain that many homes in England in which there now exists a fond hope that the distant one may return—many such homes may be rendered desolate when the next mail shall arrive. *The Angel of Death has been abroad throughout the land ; you may almost hear the beating of his wings.* There is no one, as when the first-born was slain of old, to sprinkle with blood the lintel and the two sideposts of our doors, that he may spare and pass on ; he takes his victims from the castle of the noble, the mansion of the wealthy, and the cottage of the poor and the lowly, and it is on behalf of all these classes that I make this solemn appeal.’ Hardly any other public speaker in the country could have introduced that allusion to the Angel of Death without falling into the error of

bombast ; but in Mr. Bright's case nothing was felt by his audience but the solemn and awful reality which was thus figuratively depicted. 'They were 'under the wand of the magician.'

We must resist the temptation, however, to dwell further upon Mr. Bright's marvellous powers as an orator. There are hundreds of passages scattered throughout his many speeches, of unsurpassed beauty and eloquence, and each of these presents itself for quotation. Space, however, forbids. We can but repeat that the universal verdict of the present age is, that he is the greatest orator of his time.

Of his political and personal sympathies we shall say little. One thing, however, must be said. From his youth upwards John Bright has been the friend of 'the common people.' He has himself told the world how, when he was staying at Cheltenham, as a young man, stricken down by the sorest blow which fate can inflict, with none living of his household save a motherless child, Richard Cobden came to him and urged him to join in the struggle for Free Trade. The man whose whole life had been darkened shook his head sadly, and would have turned from the prospect which his friend held out to him. Then Cobden besought him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the English poor, to 'come with him,' and win cheap bread for the people ; and at this Bright yielded, and they went out upon that wonderful campaign in which many faults were no doubt, committed upon both sides ; but in which, as time has shown, a splendid victory was won for the people of this realm.

Unquestionably Mr. Bright has owed much of his

political success to the keen foresight of Mr. Cobden. We cannot pretend that he has always been right, but it is strange to see how, nearly thirty years ago, John Bright was contending for principles which are now almost universally accepted. Through such storms of abuse and calumny as but few other men have had to encounter, he held on his way, and in spite of some errors—the result of a distinct flavour of bitterness in his character—he has lived to see men of both parties hailing him as one of the foremost men in the rank of statesmen, as well as first among orators. Let it not be supposed that he is a great administrator. Perhaps it is unfair to judge of him by his short term of office at the Board of Trade, but it is at least certain that whilst he was there he achieved no very brilliant success. It is not as the mere official that he is at all likely to shine; but when we remember that he has been one of the foremost champions of Free Trade, of Non-Intervention, of Reform, of Arbitration, of Popular Education, and of an improved rule in India; when we remember, too, with what manful courage he clung to the right side during the American War; we cannot deny that he possesses the instincts of the statesman, even though he might never have become great as an administrator.

What a change has passed over Mr. Bright's position since the days when Lord Palmerston sneered at him as 'the reverend gentleman,' or those earlier days when an enthusiastic journalist advised the Northumbrian farmers to horsewhip 'the pestilent vagabond!' When, two years ago, he was suddenly struck down by an illness which seemed likely to be fatal, there was one general outburst of mourning

from both sides of the House of Commons. It was felt that a great gap had suddenly been opened in the ranks of the foremost men in the House, and that one whom we could not afford to lose had suddenly been taken away. These lines are written before the Session of 1872 has commenced ; but it may be predicted with perfect safety, that if Mr. Bright is happily able to return to his old place, he will be greeted by a welcome such as has not been given to any Parliamentary leader within the memory of man ; and the welcome will come as much from one side of the House as from the other.

We shall make but one closing quotation from one of his speeches—a speech on the Russian War—and it is a speech which throws some light upon his character, not only by the statements it makes, but by the vein of self-appreciation which runs through it :—
' I am not, nor did I ever pretend to be, a statesman ; and that character is so tainted and so equivocal in our day, that I am not sure that a pure and honourable ambition would aspire to it. I have not enjoyed for thirty years, like these noble lords, the honours and emoluments of office. I have not set my sails to every passing breeze. I am a plain and simple citizen, sent here by one of the foremost constituencies of the empire ; representing—feebly, perhaps, but honestly, I dare aver—the opinions of very many, and the true interests of all those who have sent me here.'

That is John Bright's opinion of himself, and it shows in a somewhat striking manner at once the strength and the weakness of a character which is in every way remarkable.



EARL GRANVILLE.

NO ONE can have spent an evening in the House of Lords without having his attention attracted by a remarkable face, which is at present to be seen on the ministerial side of the House. It does not look like an English face. That, at least, will be the visitor's first impression. It is a French face rather; the bland, smiling, but not eminently intellectual countenance of a French statesman under the House of Orleans. In repose, though handsome, it has a somewhat sleepy expression that does not prepossess the gazer in favour of its owner; but when lighted up with a smile, as it is very frequently lighted up, its expression becomes at once very handsome and very winning, and no one can watch it long without feeling that those bland and comely features have in them an indefinable attractiveness.

Granville George Leveson Gower, second Earl Granville, is to-day the leader of the House of Lords. He represents in the upper chamber a Government which, however strong it may be in the other House, is here in a minority; and he is opposed by men whom critics of all parties must unite in regarding as intellectually the superiors of many of those who sit beside him on the ministerial bench. At his side he has Argyll, Russell, Somerset, Halifax, Ripon; opposite to him

are Cairns, Derby, Salisbury, and Carnarvon ; whilst on the cross-benches, a watchful and not too friendly critic, is Lord Grey.

He leads the House of Lords, but the party which follows him is in a minority in that House ; and at any moment the measures which he proposes, as the representative of the Government of the day, may be rejected by an overwhelming majority. His task is therefore one of peculiar delicacy and difficulty. It is a task which nothing but the rarest combination of qualities can enable any man to perform successfully—a task in which, it is not too much to say, that any one of the statesmen who sit beside him would fail lamentably.

Lord Granville, however, as friends and opponents alike admit, performs the duties of his post as leader of the House of Lords with a tact and discrimination which can hardly be too highly commended. The office, which would to most men be a thorny and irksome task, seems little more to him than a pleasant recreation. Whilst other men, of greater intellectual power and more richly endowed with the highest qualities of statesmanship, would grow prematurely old, and worn, and irritable under the difficulties besetting such a post, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs looks to-day twenty years younger than his age as it is recorded in 'Debrett,' and goes through his work with an ease and grace, and a never-failing flow of good spirits and even temper, that must make him the object of every man's envy.

He never speaks without that courteous smile which somehow or other seems to disarm unfriendly criticism ; he never falls into the traps set by sour or dis-

appointed members of his own party ; he meets the assaults which come from the open foe in front with a confidence which can only be likened to that of the child too innocent to have learnt that there is such a thing as evil in the world.

As you sit and watch him going through his nightly task in the gilded chamber in which the peers deliberate—standing up boldly to meet the weighty criticisms of a Cairns, or the fierce onslaught of a Salisbury ; soothing with a tact which is almost feminine the irritable grumblings of a Clanricarde ; or laughing away with charming good nature the sneers of a Westbury—you are compelled to wonder whether the grace and graciousness which always surround him are derived from art or from nature ; whether he has been from youth upwards the suave and fascinating master of men, or has acquired the manner which is so attractive and so irresistible by long years of painful study.

But whatever doubt there may be upon this point, there can be none upon another. Lord Granville's most ardent admirers cannot claim for him renown as a statesman of the highest type, or a man of supreme intellectual power. He is no new-comer in the arena of politics, whose real capacity is yet to be tested. He was born in the year which saw Napoleon crushed at Waterloo ; he entered upon his public career as an attaché to our embassy at Paris in 1835 ; he took a seat in the House of Commons in 1837 as member for Morpeth ; he was made Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs—with Lord Palmerston as his chief—by Lord Melbourne in 1840, and he has, therefore, for more than thirty years had a share in the government of

his country, either as a private member of one of the Houses of Parliament, or as a minister of the Crown.

During that long period—stretching over a whole generation in the life of man, and over many generations in the life of politics—Lord Granville has been successively Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs under Lord Melbourne; Master of the Buckhounds, Vice-President of the Board of Trade, and Secretary for Foreign Affairs, under Lord Russell; President of the Council, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, under Lord Aberdeen; and again President of the Council for six years in Lord Palmerston's two administrations. Once, in June 1859, he had the high honour of being sent for by the Queen, and requested to form an administration, nothing but the curt and ungracious refusal of Earl Russell to take office under him, preventing his appearing as the First Minister of the Crown; and once again, in 1856, he was selected for the post of Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of St. Petersburg at the coronation of the present Czar.

But while these are the great political offices and honours which have been showered upon him, what mark has Lord Granville made in politics? He would be a bold man who would say that Lord Granville had the commanding personal gifts which compel success in politics. We suppose we must admit that during his many years of faithful and honourable service he has done nothing which can be called great.

He has, it is true, been Mr. Gladstone's chosen friend and confidant during his premiership, and is generally understood to have had a large share in the measures for pacifying Ireland which were the earliest achievements of the present Ministry. But it would

be going beyond the strict bounds of truth to say that he has left the impress of his own mind upon any of the departments with which he has been at one time or another connected. Perhaps we ought to make one exception to this remark. Lord Granville has unquestionably left his mark in one of the departments of the State—that of the Colonial Office. But unfortunately it happens that his policy with respect to the Colonies has been the reverse of popular. Many Liberals have objected most strenuously to it, and the colonists themselves have uttered loud and repeated protestations against his manner of dealing with them.

Our individual opinion—let it be taken for what it is worth—is that Lord Granville's colonial policy has been fully justified; but it is certain that with the majority of Englishmen it is most unpopular. Upon the whole, it must be admitted that he has not himself achieved anything great in statesmanship. He is not known to be the author of any great public measure, though, as we have said, he is believed to have been consulting counsel in one or two of the first importance. He is not the ablest, or the most eloquent, or the most powerful member of his party. And yet to-day Lord Granville leads the House of Lords, and leads it with a success which none can question. How can the fact be explained?

Because he is a member of one of the great 'governing families' of the country? It is true that he is a Leveson-Gower, and the grandson of a Duke of Devonshire; but it is not to the mere fact that the bluest of our blue blood runs in his veins that his universal popularity, and his advancement to the great position which he now occupies, are to be attributed. Some-

thing more than family influence, and the ties of kindred, is needed to explain the fact that men whose public services are far greater than his, and with whose intellectual endowments he has nothing to compare, are willing to serve under his leadership; and that he is able to fill the most difficult post, perhaps, which can fall to the lot of any statesman, in a manner which at once satisfies his foes and delights his friends.

What, then, is the secret of his success? Few can doubt that it lies in that wonderful urbanity, that never-failing grace and courteousness of manner, to which allusion has already been made. Lord Granville is a great nobleman. He is exalted in rank; he wields all the power which large wealth bestows upon its possessors; he has at his command family influence, which can best be described by the one word, irresistible; he is, in short, a *grande seigneur*, enjoying all the rights and dignities which appertain to such a character in a country in which an even exaggerated deference is paid to the claims of wealth and rank.

But most assuredly no nobleman ever more thoroughly acted up to the maxim *noblesse oblige* than the Foreign Secretary. No one can watch him long or closely without seeing that he feels compelled alike by his very rank, and wealth, and influence, to show the world that these things are, after all, mere accidents. To use a homely phrase, Lord Granville, when in the company of his social inferiors, always seems to be apologising for the fact that he is an earl, and a great nobleman. His chief desire seems to be to put those around him at their ease, and to effect this object he adopts in his speech and demeanour a courtesy which is altogether alien to our 'rough island

tongue' and rough island manners. But there is nothing of Mr. Heep's 'umbleness in it. Indeed, though one would think it exaggerated in almost any other man, it seems natural to Lord Granville—a happy gift, which belongs to him alone amongst Englishmen.

What wonder, then, that the Earl is popular with the people? No one can be brought in contact with him without falling a willing and contented victim to the wonderful glamour which surrounds him. With his equals, of course, his demeanour is somewhat different. But in his intercourse with them, also, he gives one the impression of a man bent upon studying and adapting himself to the wants of others, rather than upon advancing his own interests. With what a charming simplicity and gracefulness he yields the palm to those who have fairly won it from him! And how unassuming and inoffensive he is in the hour of victory—the hour which, after all, tests men's qualities more than any other. Statesmen who are intellectual giants compared to Lord Granville think it no shame to be overcome by this bland and ever-courteous foe; and his rivals in his own party yield to him a deference such as they would not pay to the ablest statesman or the haughtiest nobleman in the House.

In social life Lord Granville shines as a star of the first magnitude; and his happy knack of bringing into the House of Lords something of the atmosphere of the drawing-room, aids him not a little in his difficult task. Who can have passed from the House of Commons—hot, turbulent, angry—to the House of Lords, without being struck by the peace and good-

breeding which flourish under Lord Granville's rule in the latter place? And wherever he goes the noble Earl is the same. No man can preside over a social gathering with greater success; no man can do more to overcome the difficulties attending any great public undertaking—such as the Exhibitions of 1851 and 1862; no man can blend more harmoniously the conflicting elements of society.

A hundred anecdotes might be told to illustrate his irrepressible goodnature, and his absolute freedom from all pride of birth or place. It seems but yesterday—alas! it is ten long years ago—that the writer saw him on May 1, 1862, broom in hand, sweeping up the scattered refuse which lay about the dais under the dome of the Exhibition building, half-an-hour before the time fixed for the opening ceremony. He swept then, with a vigour which said as much for his undiminished physical powers as for his carelessness of the restraints of mere etiquette. And one Easter Monday, two or three years ago, the writer again beheld him wandering in the crowd gathered upon the slopes of the Spur Battery at Dover, laden with loaves of bread, raised pies, and piles of sandwiches—the remnants of the luncheon of which his party had just partaken—and distributing these good things with careful impartiality amongst the ragged boys and women, of whom too many were to be seen, attending the Volunteer Review then being held.

Lord Granville, as successor to Lord Clarendon at the Foreign Office, has pursued the even tenour of his way with marked success. At the moment at which we write, one great cloud is indeed looming

before us, in the shape of the new difficulty with reference to the Alabama arbitration; and it is impossible to acquit the present Ministry of all blame with regard to the wording of the Treaty on which so much depends. But it is highly probable that neither Lord Granville nor Mr. Gladstone can be held personally responsible for the unhappy ambiguousness of a single phrase, and it is certain that both were actuated by the best motives in seeking for this settlement of the Alabama dispute. Those who are inclined to quarrel with Lord Granville for his foreign policy, should remember the skill with which he maintained the neutrality of England during the war of 1870. No man was more hotly abused than he was at that time, and his non-intervention on behalf of France was argued against him as though it were a crime of the first magnitude. There are not many people now who hold that opinion.

Events fully justified the course which he took; whilst his tact and shrewdness have saved us from any after-troubles resulting from our neutrality, like those which we inherit as a legacy from Lord Russell's Foreign Secretaryship. The skill which Lord Granville displayed in dealing with such matters as Count Bernstorff's modest proposals about a 'benevolent neutrality,' showed that he knew how to conduct the game of diplomacy with as much skill as Lord Clarendon himself; whilst it is difficult to resist the impression that there is a solid foundation to his character as a Foreign Minister which was not to be found in his predecessor.

In the House of Lords, or when he is presiding over one of the grave learned societies with which he is

connected, he will lighten the most solemn occasions by some playful allusion to the notorious peculiarities of some other public man, or to his own family affairs—as when he told the members of the University of London, shortly after his charming wife had presented him with a daughter, that he now felt a personal interest in the question of education such as he had never before known. A graceful and polished speaker in his own tongue, he has a more perfect command of the French language than any other public man of our day, and the speeches which he has upon different occasions made in Paris have excited the unbounded admiration of our gallant allies.

Lord Granville's Liberalism is not easily defined. It is almost as remote from the stiff Whiggism of Lord Russell as from the ultra-Radicalism of Mr. Fawcett; and it never betrays him into the perfervid eccentricities which sometimes characterise Mr. Gladstone's political career. Perhaps it may be best described as a social creed. He is a politician of the *salon*—a disciple of Lord Palmerston, who even now copies his great master's example as closely as the changed times in which he lives will permit him to do so. He has a chivalrous sympathy with the people, and he feels that he can best express that sympathy by his adherence to the Liberal party. For a long time men looked upon his Liberalism with something akin to suspicion; and it is only within the last three years that his own party has accepted him with unreserved confidence and cordiality.

Certainly Lord Granville has shown a great capacity for moving with the times. Who would have ten years ago, that Lord Palmerston's favourite

peer, the 'safe' man, who was then looked upon as the future leader of an inert Whig party, would in December, 1868, walk down the Castle Hill at Windsor arm-in-arm with Mr. John Bright, just after the latter hon. gentleman had been introduced to the Queen on his appointment as a Cabinet Minister? It says much for Lord Granville's ready acquiescence in the inevitable, that he should have done such a thing; and we may be sure that he did it in the most graceful and pleasing of manners.

The leader of the Liberal party need never fear that the noble Earl will trouble him with any awkward crotchets. He is one of those who put the duty of fidelity to their party above most other things; his easy, yielding, and somewhat indolent disposition, would never tempt him into a Cave, or lead him to break with his political allies. Indeed, rather than sever the personal ties which unite him to his present colleagues, he would surrender most of his prejudices—if he has any—and possibly something of his principles also. As long as he occupies a seat in the House of Lords, he will enjoy an undiminished personal popularity; and as long as he leads the Upper Chamber, he will do so with admirable tact and good temper. But after all, the Church of England found, once upon a time, that it needed in its Primate something more than 'a benevolent smile,' and the Liberal peers may possibly some day discover that an exquisite urbanity is not the only qualification required by a statesman.



LORD CAIRNS.

No greater contrast in personal appearance, in demeanour, in antecedents, in tone of thought and style of language, could well be conceived than that which is presented to Lord Granville by the nobleman who sits on the other side of the floor of the House of Lords, as leader of the Opposition in that august assemblage. Lord Granville has himself publicly reminded the world of his connection with the Gowers, the Howards, and the Cavendishes.

He is a born aristocrat, blessed with all the polish and the *savoir faire* which such a man may, if he chooses, acquire by instinct. Lord Cairns is allied to none of the noble families on an equality with whom he has now been placed. The blood of no great master of men in bye-gone ages flows in his veins. His life has not been passed in the *salon* of the nobleman, amidst the refinements and the amenities which surround the great. He is sprung of the people—the second son of an Irish gentleman; his life has been spent in ceaseless labour—labour of a kind of which the Howards, and the Gowers, and the Cavendishes can have no knowledge, except by repute—labour first for the mere necessities of life, then for fame and for power. Not until these things had been gained—

not until by slow, laborious steps, he had raised himself on the most difficult of all ascents, was he in a position to compete successfully with men like Lord Granville in that other kind of labour to which the highest are not strangers—labour on behalf of a party or a principle.

Looking at the two men as they sit opposite to each other in the House of Lords this afternoon, one may see even in their personal appearance some indication of the diversity of the paths which have brought them at last to the same level of equality. Lord Granville has been already sketched in these pages. Lord Cairns, who now sits with outstretched legs, folded arms, and drooping head, is considerably taller than the leader of the Ministerialists. He has that wiry well-knit frame, the possession of which must help any man so greatly in his struggle with the world; but that he has used his strength, spent it freely, if not prodigally, in the battle through which he has passed is proved, if by nothing else, by the pallor of his fine intellectual countenance—a countenance clean-cut like that of a Greek statue, in repose somewhat severe of aspect, but at all times stamped with the unmistakable impress of power.

He looks wonderfully young, this gentleman whose fortune it has been to lead the most aristocratic party in the most aristocratic assemblage in the world. Around him are gathered other peers whose ages are duly recorded in that most impertinent of books, the 'Scarlet-bound Bible of the British Tuft-hunter.' They are men who were born to earldoms and dukedoms, and whose lives have been spent, as it were, under shelter; but Lord Cairns looks younger than

those of them who were born in the same year as himself ; and that he is still in the very prime of life, and in the fullest possession of physical as well as mental strength, is evident. And yet how different a career his has been to that of his compeers !

When the story of his life comes to be written, it will read more like a romance than a reality ; and the young men of many a future generation might be pointed to him as the exemplar whom they must copy if they would achieve success. One can scarcely believe, looking at the quiet, reserved, ' self-contained, and somewhat frosty man, who sits to-day on the front Opposition bench of the House of Peers, that he can really have passed through such a struggle as that which lay between his starting-point in life, and the eminence at which he has now arrived.

He began life at the bar, and so short a time is it since he received his first brief, that to himself it must seem but as yesterday that he was a struggling junior looking forward to the day when he should ' take silk ' as one of the bare possibilities of a remote future. But his great talents and his unequalled industry helped him in his legal practice as they helped him in everything else ; and by the time he reached his thirtieth year, he was already well-known in those wide-spreading circles which have the woolsack as their centre.

In 1852, when he had entered upon his thirty-third year, he had gained that great step in the battle of life from which a man of genius may fight his way to almost any eminence—a seat in the House of Commons. He was returned for Belfast, and he soon made his mark in the House. A staunch Conserva-

tive, an enlightened and liberal advocate of the principles of his party, possessed of remarkable ability as a public speaker, and distinguished for the clearness and argumentative power with which he could lay the facts of a case before an audience, he was soon marked out for preferment. Lord Derby and Mr. Disraeli were alike able to appreciate his talents, and the post of Solicitor-General, with the honour of knighthood, was speedily conferred upon him.

Sir Hugh Cairns fulfilled the comparatively humble duties of 'Mr. Solicitor' with admirable tact and power; he became known in the House of Commons as one of the most brilliant members of a party which has had many brilliant adherents, and it was not long before he had gained such a standing in that most critical of assemblages, that the news that 'Cairns was up' sufficed to fill the benches in the House, and to empty the dining-room and library. But Sir Hugh had allied himself to a party whose lot it was to spend many years in the cold shade of opposition; and for a long period his professional advancement was, in consequence, at a standstill. He gained fresh laurels at the bar; he became yet more fully recognised in the House as one of the leaders of the Opposition; he laboured unweariedly both in his profession and in Parliament, but he had to see the highest honours which a ministry could bestow enjoyed by men whose inferiority to himself they themselves would have been the last to dispute, whilst no reward but the approval of his own conscience followed his political exertions.

The turn of the wheel came at length, however, and in 1866 Hugh McCalmont Cairns followed his

party across the floor of the House, and became Attorney-General to the Derby Administration. But this was not the highest reward which the leader whom he had served so faithfully had in store for him.

In October of the same year he quitted the House of Commons amidst the regrets of men of all parties, and accepted the easy and dignified post of a Lord Justice of Appeal. Very soon the Ministry found reason to regret that his brilliant talents were thus lost to his party, and in 1867, the man who had been a struggling stuff-gownsmen fifteen years before, was raised to the peerage. In the following year, when Mr. Disraeli succeeded Lord Derby in the Premiership, he did not forget the faithful friend who had for so many years been his constant ally on the front Opposition bench of the Lower House. Almost his first act upon receiving the commands of her Majesty to form an administration, was to place the Great Seal at the disposal of Lord Cairns, who thus, at the age of forty-nine, and in spite of the adverse influences surrounding him in consequence of his political creed, attained the highest honour of his profession, and inscribed his name in the long list of those great lawyers who have occupied the woolsack.

To most men who have fought their way up to this eminence, the Lord Chancellorship is a point at which they are content to rest and be thankful. They can go no further; they have reached the highest stone of the legal pyramid; and though some of them may be inclined, like Alexander, to weep over the fact that there are no fresh legal worlds to conquer, or may even, like Lord Brougham, meditate a new career in

another country, they are for the most part satisfied with the result of labours, the extent of which is known only to themselves, and settle down quietly to the enjoyment of a peerage and a pension. But in the case of Lord Cairns his tenure of the woolsack would seem only to have been a fresh starting-point in his career.

As Lord Chancellor he not only fulfilled his professional duties to the satisfaction of the legal world, but took an active part in the politics of the day. It was not, however, until the close of the session of 1868, when, exhausted with the labours of his double duties as President of the House of Lords and a Chancery Judge, that Lord Cairns made the great speech which marked him out for still higher party preferment than any which he had yet received. The speech was that upon the Irish Church Suspensory Bill, which had come up from the lower chamber. Never will those who witnessed the brilliant scene presented by the House of Peers on that memorable night forget it. Our hereditary legislators had mustered in stronger force than upon almost any previous occasion within the recollection of living men; the galleries were crowded by the peeresses dazzling in their beauty and their jewels, the most notable men in the House of Commons were huddled together at the bar, or on the steps of the throne; whilst at the side of the woolsack stood the Lord Chancellor, pale and emaciated, evidently very ill, but possessed by a spirit which no physical infirmities could overcome, and pouring forth for hours an unbroken stream of clear and logical eloquence against the measure before the House. Every one in the crowded chamber listened spell-bound. Men who had known Hugh

Cairns for a score of years were lost in admiration at the power which he had now developed, and which so far surpassed all their previous experience of him ; cheer upon cheer rolled from the ministerial benches at the close of each glowing period, and when the end was reached, and the Lord Chancellor resumed his seat upon the woolsack, the applause came from both sides of the House, whilst the very ladies rose in their enthusiasm and joined in the general approbation by the waving of fans and handkerchiefs.

It was a great and almost unexampled success, and its effect upon the life of Lord Cairns has not yet ceased. Mr. Disraeli, as all the world knows, left office in the following December, and when Parliament met in February, 1869, it was announced that the leadership of the Conservative party in the House of Peers had been assumed by the ex-Lord Chancellor. No one who is not intimately acquainted with the inner spirit of English social life can appreciate the full extent of the honour which was thus bestowed upon Lord Cairns. For centuries it has been one of the traditions of our aristocracy that they should be led in their own chamber only by one of themselves, by a man whose fathers had for a dozen generations been amongst our born law-givers, and who was himself allied to the leading members of both parties in the House. Lord Cairns of course had no pretensions of this kind. It was but seventeen years since he was elected for Belfast, and entered the popular chamber as an obscure Commoner. Only seventeen years ! And in that time he had passed through the successive stages of legal honour until he had reached the highest ; had ob-

tained a coronet ; and had the leadership of his party in the most aristocratic assemblage in the world bestowed upon him by acclamation ! Generations hence men will marvel at the 'wondrous tale' of the man who now sits opposite Lord Granville in the House of Lords.

This sketch of Lord Cairns' career is hardly a part of that 'photograph' which we have promised our readers ; but after all, only those who were acquainted with his story could rightly appreciate the position which he now occupies. It is by the weight of sheer ability that he has gained that position, and it is the possession of unmistakable power that is now the most noticeable feature in his character. He is not a frequent speaker in the House of Lords. As leader of the Opposition he was of course entitled, of right, to speak on every subject of importance before the House, but he spoke only when it was necessary that he should do so ; and since his retirement on the ground of ill health from this post of honour, he has seldom addressed the House except on legal questions. His speeches are clear, simple, logical ; and the absence of all political acerbity is a very prominent trait in his character. He is one of the most thorough-going Conservatives in the House of Lords, but his Conservatism has not always commanded the sympathy of his followers, because it has more than once been modified to meet the necessities of the time. The compromise on the Irish Church Bill, for instance, damaged his popularity with those who were in favour of resisting that measure to the bitter end. Lord Cairns was too practical and too far-seeing to oppose the settle-

ment of a measure upon which the voice of the country had been unmistakably expressed. He fought against it with remarkable ability as long as there was the smallest hope of success attending his labours; but when such hope had vanished, he made haste to come to terms with the enemy, and secure everything that he could in the shape of compensation for the disestablished Church. His course did not give satisfaction to many of his friends, though the world at large will hardly question its propriety.

It was undoubtedly a fair example of the shrewdness and practical wisdom which distinguish him. There is another point, too, in which Lord Cairns differs somewhat from many other politicians. He always 'fights fair.' Perhaps there is a certain degree of coldness in his temperament which prevents his exciting the enthusiasm of his party to the extent to which such men as the late Lord Derby could move it. But on the other hand he enjoys the respect and esteem of his opponents as well as his supporters and colleagues. He conducts his arguments, when speaking, a little too much perhaps in the style of the counsel arguing at *Nisi Prius*; but when a great occasion comes, such as that to which we have already alluded, he is roused out of his old forms of thought and speech, and for the moment wins the applause of all who are capable of being moved by an eloquence which is not the less powerful that it is seldom impassioned.

Too many men who had passed through the tremendous struggle which has fallen to the lot of Lord Cairns would have emerged from it with a soured temper, and a cynicism the fruit of bitter

experience. But no evil results of this kind have attended the battle of life in his case.

What will be his future? Since, in consequence of failing health, he retired from the leadership of his party in favour of the Duke of Richmond, he has taken no prominent part in politics; and yet one can hardly doubt that he will be heard of again. No doubt the Lord Chancellorship would be his by right if the Tory party returned to power, and those who are in favour of legal reform, whatever may be their political bias, would be delighted to see him again upon the woolsack; but whether he will ever again take the leadership of the Conservatives is extremely doubtful, though most outsiders will be of opinion that few better men for the post could be found than the brilliant and indefatigable peer who has risen so rapidly and to such a height.





THE MARQUIS OF HARTINGTON.

No ministry is supposed to be complete without its due proportion of dukes. But when dukes cannot be obtained, their eldest sons must serve in their stead. It is only upon this ground that it is possible to account for the presence of the Marquis of Hartington in the present cabinet. He is the heir to one of the great Whig dukedoms ; his father commands nearly half-a-dozen votes in the Lower House, and is besides the possessor of vast political influence in more than one English county.

In his own veins runs the bluest of the blue blood of our aristocracy. These, and these chiefly, if not only, are the reasons why the Right Honourable Spencer Compton Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington, holds now the great office of Secretary for Ireland, and a seat in the cabinet of Mr. Gladstone. We say that these are certainly the foremost reasons ; even although Lord Hartington is a man of unquestionable ability of a kind no one will pretend that his mere abilities are such as to entitle him to his present post.

Mr. Fawcett, for instance, were he asked to give an illustration of the good to be gained by promoting merit, without reference to birth, would hardly point to Lord Hartington as a case in point. It is in con-

sequence, not in spite, of his birth that he has become what he is.

What does the spectator who looks at the Treasury Bench, whilst the House is sitting, see when his eye rests upon the Marquis of Hartington? He sees a rather good-looking man, of tall stature. He is quite young yet—far younger than any of his colleagues. But the handsome face has a worn, listless look that adds ten years to his apparent age. The eyes are downcast, the moustache droops heavily over the full and loosely-moulded lips; the man himself has the air of one who is hopelessly bored with the business of the State which is going on around him, and in which it is his lot to be so prominent an actor. And when my Lord Hartington rises to speak, the impression which he produces upon his hearers is hardly more favourable than that produced by his personal appearance. The tall young gentleman, to whom some awkward question has been put by a pertinacious Irish Member like the redoubtable Mr. Maguire, languidly gathers himself together when his tormentor has ceased, languidly rises from his seat, and languidly adjusts himself in a lounging attitude against the table of the House.

It is apparently more than this young nobleman of six-and-thirty years can do, to support himself for half-a-dozen minutes without the aid of some substantial piece of furniture. When he has satisfactorily posed himself in this manner, the long white hand is seen to play for a moment listlessly with the thick brown beard, as though my Lord Marquis kept his ideas hidden somewhere in that appendage to his handsome face, and then a thick, guttural stream of

words begins to pour forth from the lips, which are hardly opened in order to emit the sound. Listening attentively to the lazy drawl which seems to trickle down the speaker's beard, you get some faint idea that an answer is being given to the question that has just been put; but you must be particularly quick of hearing in order to understand that answer. Possibly it is not during the question-hour at all that the Marquis has risen. He may have been called upon for an exposition of some great State question, at a time when that question is attracting the earnest attention of Parliament. But there is no difference in the speaker's manner. There is the same indolent grace in the slouching attitude he adopts; the same imperturbable self-possession in the manner in which he strokes and pats the thick brown beard; the same cool indifference to everybody and everything in the tone in which he drawls out his slipshod sentences.

The nervous man trembles as he listens to the Marquis of Hartington whilst he is speaking. At every moment it seems that the stuttering, stammering, halting flow of words will come to a final stop; and that the grievously over-taxed physical powers of the speaker will collapse altogether. But let no unaccustomed listener labour under any such apprehension. It is true that it is but 'a lumbering wain' of speech which Lord Hartington drives, but it is at any rate a sure one. The Marquis has far too keen a sense of the ridiculous to do anything so absurd as break down. He has, moreover, far too haughty a contempt for his audience to care to conceal from them his inability to construct smooth and flowing

sentences, to express his ideas. He can think on his legs ; and though his thoughts may not be very brilliant, such as they are he feels no hesitation about presenting them, in all their baldness and incoherency, to the first political assemblage in the world. But then, has he not taken the measure of that assemblage, as of everything else under the sun ? Has he not discovered that here, as well as elsewhere, nineteen-twentieths of the people are very ordinary persons, who have a profound respect for a duke's son, and who are by no means quick to discern or resent his defects ?

The cynicism which is one of his characteristics is by no means assumed ; it is but the natural expression of the feelings of one who has tasted most pleasures, and made acquaintance with most men under the sun, and who finds pleasure and work, and fame and power, alike a weariness to the flesh and a 'vain vanity' to the spirit. Why should he then trouble himself to show the people who have not tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge that he possesses any of the qualities which they are accustomed to esteem ? He need not display those qualities, he need not have them, in order to gain everything that it is possible for the most gifted of men to gain. Without showing either remarkable ability or remarkable industry, he finds himself not only a member of Parliament, but a Cabinet Minister and the head of a great State department.

Of so much importance do some men consider his presence in the House of Commons, that when he is defeated in fair fight in North Lancashire, one Mr. Green Price, member for the Radnor burghs,

straightway commits political suicide in order to make way for him, and performs this tremendous act of self-sacrifice without hope of reward, and without, as he takes care to declare, having any personal knowledge of the Marquis.

All other honours, moreover, which are the highest and exceptional rewards of great genius and great services are his by right of birth. He has but to stretch out his hands in order to grasp them. Nay, at this very moment, many a shrewed political prophet would be ready to back the Marquis of Hartington for the premiership itself. Much more unlikely things have come to pass than that this languid young man should be called to the helm of affairs, the virtual rulership of the British Empire.

Can we wonder, when we remember all these things, that the Marquis of Hartington, though he has been a Cabinet Minister in two administrations, should never have shown the capacity which might reasonably be looked for even in a subordinate member of a government? Let us not be too hard upon the Marquis. Few men would be able to resist the temptations of such a position as that which he occupies, and it is something to see the heir of the Duke of Devonshire submitting to the drudgery of late sittings in the House of Commons, to the annoyance of having to answer the absurd and impertinent questions of 'cads,' and to the wearing routine of office work. It would be too much—would it not?—to expect such a man, in addition to making these sacrifices for the sake of the public service, to condescend to increase the debt of gratitude owed to him by his country, by giving proof that he was not altogether destitute of the

ability without which a man of the middle-class could never have climbed beyond an Under-Secretaryship or a Junior Lordship of the Treasury.

We are not without a faint idea that this ability is not wanting in the heir of the great house of Cavendish. It certainly ought to be there if genius be hereditary, for Lord Hartington is the son of one of the ablest men and most accomplished scholars of his day ; and he had the great advantage during the years of his nonage at Holkar Hall, of being under the direct tuition of his father. But if he does possess great ability, the young nobleman has achieved a remarkable success in his endeavours to hide it from the vulgar gaze.

Flatterers will, of course, be ready to assure the public that the Marquis of Hartington is an administrator of tried skill, and that he possesses that statesmanlike capacity, that breadth of view, that soundness of judgment, without which no one can hope to succeed in the battle of life. And we must not accuse these men of deliberate lying. There is a form of that peculiar disease called colour-blindness, which renders many persons, acute enough in every other respect, quite unable to see the blemishes and imperfections in the character of anyone so lofty in station as the heir to a dukedom. The glamour of great rank surrounds the Marquis of Hartington, and nothing is more astonishing than the influence which that glamour has upon the world at large.

To this nobleman have been entrusted in succession the duties involved in the charge of the War Office, of the Post Office, and of Irish Affairs. His present position appears to us to be that for which he

is best fitted. He has some knowledge of Ireland, acquired by the actual possession of property in the island ; he has the courage and self-control which are absolutely needed by any man who is brought much in contact with Irish politicians ; and his personal independence makes him very careless about the assaults to which an Irish Secretary is constantly exposed. As Postmaster-General he was, of course, little more than a cypher ; and as Secretary for War he might not be worse, but he was certainly not better than his predecessors.

And yet it is impossible to deny that Lord Hartington has at least one great merit. He does not blunder. He may never do anything brilliantly ; may never display a spark of original genius of any kind ; but he is at least free alike from the awkwardness which generally distinguishes plebeian mediocrity, and from the rash impetuosity which is frequently allied to more brilliant talents.

Nobody—not even the fiercest democrat—can study the Marquis without coming to the conclusion that there must, after all, be something in birth. Despite all the defects at which we have hinted—defects the gravest which could well attach to the character of any statesman—Lord Hartington seems able by the mere instinct implanted in him at his birth to hold his own amongst our rulers. He does so in a slouching, listless way, which would be tolerated in nobody else, it is true ; but he has acquired sufficient tact, and sufficient insight into men and things, to be able to avoid the pitfalls and failures into which many far abler men are constantly falling.

Just because he is too cool and self-possessed when

speaking ever to break down, even when his ideas are fewest and his language baldest, so he will never tumble into any egregious blunder in the work he has in hand, simply because he regards that work with a cavalier indifference which will always prevent his suffering from the nervousness or the over-anxiety which are so fatal to abler men. He is a representative man in the present Cabinet; and though it may be well that the class of which he is the type should be represented in every Ministry, nobody, we are sure, would like to see too many Lord Hartingtons gathered together in one administration.





MR. WILSON-PATTEN.

MR. WILSON-PATTEN is a good type of a peculiar class of statesmen. The world at large, the mere newspaper-reading, club-frequenting world, has its own special idols in the House of Commons, and believes in them alone. It pins its faith to Gladstone or Disraeli, according to the political creed which it professes, and it regards Lowe, Bright, Bruce, Goschen, and Cardwell as the lieutenants of the one, and Hardy, Northcote, Manners, and Hunt as the lieutenants of the other. Out of the circumscribed list of statesmen in which it thus deals it seldom travels; and it has little belief in anyone who is not to be found within the limits of those lists.

But those who are familiar with the inner life of politics, those to whom our statesmen are something more than mere names, know that not the least influential of their number are men with whose reputation the public is comparatively unfamiliar—men who are not regarded by the press or by the platform demagogues of provincial towns as at all important or influential. In fact, in politics as in most other things, there are workers whose labour lies comparatively behind the scenes, but who, although they may not often figure in public, are not the less important

upon that account. It would be easy to name many such men. Some of them are not even in Parliament; and yet they exercise, somehow or other, a mysterious influence over the destinies of party. They may occasionally be seen, these men, in the lobby on the eve of a great division. What they are doing there no one knows, and yet they are evidently perfectly at home. They exchange curt sentences with the whips of their respective parties; they hold long conversations with sundry honourable gentlemen in nooks and corners of the various corridors, and they may even be seen in consultation with the great party leaders, and not—be it remarked—listening to those eminent men, but talking to them in a patronising, and even an authoritative fashion. This is one type of the man behind the scenes in the political arena.

Another type may be found seated on one of the back benches, amongst beardless young lordlings from the counties, and heavy men, with big watch-chains and bulging shirt-fronts, from the manufacturing towns. This man sits there apparently the least noticeable of all the men upon his bench. He seldom speaks; he seldom cheers; he never intrudes himself upon the notice of the House. The 'new member' who has come up from the country swelling with a sense of his self-importance, and whose heart, during the first days of his membership, has been somewhere in his boots, first plucks up courage, first begins to recover his self-esteem, when he is brought in contact with this man.

The quiet old gentleman with the white hair and the wrinkled weather-beaten face, looks so very modest and insignificant, that Mr. Boanerges thinks it safe

to assume towards him a little of the manner with which he has been accustomed to strike awe into the breasts of the burgesses of Puddlecombe. But some day he will see, in the middle of an important debate on some great social or economical question, a strange and disturbing sight. He will behold the right hon. gentleman, the Prime Minister, leaving his seat on the Treasury Bench, and slipping up the gangway to that retired spot where the quiet old gentleman is sitting in his usual state of quiescence. He will watch with envious eyes a long-whispered conference between the leader of the House and the man he has been inwardly despising; and when, during the course of the evening, the latter rises to speak, he will be stricken with astonishment at the sudden silence which falls upon the House, and at the respectful attention with which all that the obscure member has to say is listened to.

There is yet another type of the man behind the scenes. The representatives of this type are, however, not so entirely hidden from the public gaze as those who belong to the classes we have already noticed. They are men of mark in their counties, where they enjoy a popularity of the most enviable kind, where nobody thinks of venturing to contest their seats, and where they are continually receiving signal marks of the public favour. They are, moreover, men of mark within the walls of the House of Commons, though outside it, except within the boundaries of their own district, they are comparatively unknown. In the House, however, they shine not because of their eloquence or their powers in debate, but partly because of their popularity with their con-

stituents, partly because of their unblemished personal characters, and partly because, if they have not the showy qualities which are necessary to make a man a popular legislator, they have those solid virtues which are as valuable in the House of Commons as they are anywhere else.

It is this third type which the Right Honourable John Wilson-Patten may be said to represent. The public out of doors are perhaps but little acquainted with Mr. Wilson-Patten's name. They know him as a Member of Parliament, and an ex-Cabinet Minister—that is all. But go down to North Lancashire, and you will find, however bitter may be the party differences which rend the people of that district, that there is but one opinion with respect to Mr. Wilson-Patten. He is *par excellence* the member for the county; the man who is looked upon as the representative of the special interests of the district, and who is sent up to Parliament to speak, not in the name of this or that party or clique, but in the name of North Lancashire as a whole.

At the last general election, when, as we know, political strife ran higher in Lancashire than in any other district of England, a tremendous battle—one recalling the giant combats of the Reform era—was fought in the northern division of the county. For several years Mr. Wilson-Patten and Lord Hartington had shared the representation of that division—the former being the nominee of the Conservatives, and the latter of the Liberals. But when the country was being called upon to give its verdict upon the question of the Irish Church, Lord Derby, withdrawing his younger son, Captain Stanley, from the represen-

tation of Preston, sent him into North Lancashire, to do battle against Lord Hartington.

It might have seemed natural that the first step taken by the Liberals would have been to choose a second candidate, so as to enable them to fight the battle upon equal terms. It was felt, however, that Mr. Wilson-Patten was too secure in the favour of all parties for his seat to be shaken, and even in that moment of keen political strife, and in the midst of the most exciting contest which the election witnessed, his return was practically unopposed. A more striking evidence of the estimation in which he is held in his native county it would have been impossible to obtain.

And if you go into the House of Commons, you will find that Mr. Wilson-Patten occupies a place there which is not dissimilar to that which he holds down in North Lancashire. He enjoys the respect of men of all parties. Sitting on the front Opposition bench, and holding a prominent place in the ranks of the Conservative party, he nevertheless commands the esteem and the confidence of the most uncompromising of Radicals.

On his own side of the House few men can compete with him in the personal popularity which he enjoys. He is not a brilliant speaker; he has not gained any laurels as a Minister; he has never taken a prominent part in great debates; but he is, nevertheless, a power in the House of Commons. One has but to watch the House whilst he is addressing it, in order to gather some idea of the estimation in which he is held. His words are listened to with silent attention; his opinions evidently carry weight with them amongst all parties, and he himself is the

subject of not a few complimentary allusions from the leaders of the opposite party.

It is not only in his public appearances in the House that Mr. Wilson-Patten exercises a decided influence upon the course of legislation. Those who know anything of what transpires behind the scenes are well aware that there are not many men who take a more active share in the movements of his party than the right hon. gentleman the member for North Lancashire.

Mr. Wilson-Patten's position is to be attributed in a very great degree to his admirable personal qualities of frankness, courtesy, and fairness. In the House of Commons as well as elsewhere these qualities are not unappreciated. It is a mistake to suppose that intellect is everything there, or that the mere master of debate is the only man who can rise to eminence in that powerful assembly. On the contrary, not a few men could be named who, possessing intellectual gifts of the highest description, have nevertheless failed to make that progress in Parliament which might have been expected from them, simply because they lack the personal qualities which in private life command respect and esteem. Nay, at this moment there is in the Government at least one man of genius who would unquestionably hold a much higher position than he does in the good graces of the House, if he were able to exercise the functions of the Minister with a little of the graciousness of the ordinary gentleman.

On the other hand, there are on both sides of the House men who, if they are not very brilliant, are so estimable in their private characters, so free from any bias of mere prejudice or passion, that their opinions

have a far greater weight than that which attaches to those of much abler and more conspicuous statesmen. These men represent the moral worth of the House, and though that is a quality which is not displayed through the medium of newspaper columns, or in the heat of a party debate, it is not the less one which the House appreciates, and to which it is ready to render a willing homage.

Mr. Wilson-Patten holds an enviable position in Parliament. Little as he may be known outside the walls of the House of Commons, except in his own county, he is esteemed by his fellow-members as the representative of the qualities at which we have hinted; and nobody who knows anything of the inner life of politics will doubt that his adherence to any Ministry would add something to its weight in the House, if not in the country. More than once he has been called upon to take high office in a Conservative Government, and for a limited period he held that post which, more perhaps than any other, demands the most extensive knowledge of the customs of Parliament, and the most unflagging courtesy—the post of Chairman of Committees of the whole House. The manner in which Mr. Wilson-Patten discharged his duties at that time, as well as the position which he has since taken in Parliament, convinced many people that he was admirably fitted for the office of Speaker. It is unfortunately the custom to make the election of a moderator for the great popular assemblage a party question; but were this not so, and were Mr. Wilson-Patten a few years younger than he is, we could have little doubt that his merits would have been recognised by his nomination to fill the Speaker's chair when it was last vacant.



THE EARL OF CARNARVON.

THE history of Henry Howard Molyneux, fourth Earl of Carnarvon, has yet to be written. Though Lord Carnarvon has held high office in the service of his country, and has taken a prominent part in the party conflicts in the House of Lords, his political career may be said as yet but to have commenced. Whither it may carry him before it is ended, none can say.

Lord Carnarvon is memorable as one of the three Ministers who retired from Lord Derby's Government in 1868, because of the character of Mr. Disraeli's proposals on the question of Reform. This was undoubtedly the most important event of his political life, and it has had strange results. It is somewhat singular to look back to that time, and see what the effect produced by their retirement from the Ministry has been upon each of the three dissatisfied statesmen of that day.

It is impossible not to feel that a grave error was committed by General Peel, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Carnarvon, when they deliberately abandoned their party at a moment of unexampled difficulty in its history. The irresistible waves of the great ocean of time had carried that party to a point at which it

had become absolutely necessary that the policy by which it had hitherto been guided should be reconsidered, and some sacrifice of traditions and sentiments dear to it made. Whether or not wisdom prevailed in the counsels of the party at that moment is a point upon which we need not dwell now ; but it is at least certain that the party was materially weakened, its influence diminished, and its *prestige* damaged by the formidable secession of three Cabinet Ministers from its ranks.

Nevertheless, the secession did not prove fatal to the party, and its main consequences have fallen upon the shoulders of the secessionists themselves. General Peel immediately retired into private life, and he is now a simple private citizen, absent even from that House where he was so well known and so much respected. Lord Salisbury, whilst he has shown many great qualities, and bids fair to establish his position as one of the foremost statesmen of his generation, has displayed a rooted antagonism to the leader of the party of which he is a member, which has made him less an actor in, than a critic of, the political events of his time.

It is upon Lord Carnarvon, however, that the secession from the Derby Ministry, and the events which followed it, have had the most marked result. No man in England was more strenuously opposed to such a sweeping alteration in the electoral system as that which Mr. Disraeli carried out, than was Lord Carnarvon. His Conservatism upon this point was developed to the fullest possible extent, and rather than be a party to what he believed to be a fatal policy, he abandoned office, and stood aside for a

time from the active conflicts of political life. Nevertheless, when once that sweeping change had been made, Lord Carnarvon was of all men the readiest to acknowledge its consequences.

Not even Mr. Gladstone himself saw with a clearer eye what must be the fruits of Household Suffrage than did Lord Carnarvon. The staunch Conservative, who had shrunk with horror and dismay from Mr. Disraeli's proposals on the subject of Electoral Reform, no sooner saw those proposals carried out, than he became one of the first to take part in what he conceived to be the necessary work which followed that event. His mind was 'educated,' not by degrees, but in a single day; and with unflinching courage he prepared to take his part in the work which the great constitutional change that had been carried out had imposed upon public men.

The result has been a certain estrangement between Lord Carnarvon and his party. He has been more zealous than the most zealous of them in pursuing the work which at its outset he opposed. He cannot be said to be less Conservative than he formerly was, the mere fact that as a rule he acts consistently with Lord Salisbury being a sufficient proof to the contrary; but upon certain points he has developed a spirit which is unquestionably more akin to that of Radicalism than of Conservatism. Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt that Lord Carnarvon will in the future be found acting in harmony with the recognised leaders of his party, in the House of which he is a member. That upon certain important matters he differs from them in opinion must be admitted; but those differences are to be accounted for more by pecu-

liarities of temperament than by any serious dissimilarity in the principles by which he is guided. In the main, he is staunchly Conservative, and there does not seem much ground for the expectation which some entertain that he will ere long break loose altogether from the old ties, and seek alliances elsewhere.

There are few men in Parliament whose support is more to be desired by either of the great parties than is that of Lord Carnarvon; for there are few men who can vie with him in those personal qualities which command the esteem and admiration alike of friends and opponents. With a highly-cultivated mind of statesman-like breadth and capacity, he unites a singularly gentle and amiable disposition, a captivating manner, a spotless character, and an elevated moral tone, not, unfortunately, too commonly exhibited in the arena of politics. He shows at all times, moreover, a sympathy with the suffering and the unfortunate which is of itself a sure claim to the esteem of most men, even though occasionally—as has been the case with Lord Carnarvon—it leads those who possess it into unmistakable errors.

We are sure, however, that the public will not care to dwell upon Lord Carnarvon's mistakes—such as they are. These mistakes are in almost every case to be attributed rather to an excess of conscientiousness, and of the chivalrous sentiment which is one of his most marked characteristics, than to any intellectual defect, or to any of those angularities of character which are to be found in so many other men.

It is to be regretted that the Earl is a victim to a marked nervousness of manner when speaking, which does not a little to mar his powers as a debater. *

That these powers are of a very high order has again and again been proved. Lord Carnarvon's speeches are, as a rule, admirable compositions, displaying not only conspicuous literary merit, but those moral qualities in which their author himself excels. They are full of earnestness, combined with gentleness, whilst the broad statesman-like spirit which distinguishes them does not destroy that element of human sympathy which is so greatly lacking in the efforts of some of our more ambitious and celebrated orators. Nevertheless, Lord Carnarvon has never acquired his proper place as a speaker in the House of Lords. When he begins a speech he is troubled by a nervous cough, which breaks every sentence he utters into fragments, and does not a little prevent his hearers following the sequence of his arguments with success. It is true that when he has once warmed to his subject, and gained a proper degree of confidence, this cough disappears ; but, on the other hand, the Earl's voice is singularly weak, and he has but little chance in consequence of being fully heard in the House of Lords, where only one or two highly-favoured men are able to overcome the many moral and physical obstacles which stand in the way of successful speaking. Have any of our readers attended a debate in the peers' gilded chamber? If they have done so, they must have been struck by the fact that the hall itself is constructed in such a manner that the architect apparently intended that but half of what was said should be heard. Its immense height, the irregular surface of roof and walls, the galleries, the huge vacant spaces about the throne and the bar, all tend to destroy sound ; and it is not surprising that even

when a peer has a good voice and an attentive audience, not a little of what he says falls to the ground, or only reaches the ears of the men seated next him. But everyone who has attended the Lords' debates knows that but few speakers in that distinguished assemblage are favoured with an attentive audience.

It is not a little surprising that this most aristocratic and polished of assemblages should indulge in habits savouring rather of the rowdyism of a western state congress than of any more refined parliament. The theory of the House of Lords is that, as all the members are peers, none of their number can exercise any authority over his colleagues and fellow-members. The consequence is, that the House has no Speaker, and no one responsible for the maintenance of order; and accordingly order is not maintained.

It is amusing, during the course of a great debate, to see two noble lords rise simultaneously from opposite sides of the House, and speak together, each trying to talk the other down, until some one, moved by compassion at the melancholy spectacle he is thus called upon to witness, rises and moves that Lord So-and-So be heard. It is not so amusing, however, to see the House in its normal aspect, with some forty peers present, thirty-eight of whom are divided into nineteen couples, each couple engaged in active and by no means inaudible conversation, whilst the thirtieth noble lord is trying to make his voice heard above the universal hubbub, as he delivers a speech which has cost him days of anxious preparation, and the fortieth gives evidence by an occasional snore of alarming magnitude that if he is not one of the

talkers, he is also not one of the listeners, of the distinguished company.

Even more melancholy, however, is that spectacle which is occasionally witnessed when the House is full, and a great division is about to take place, and when the peer who is speaking is absolutely unable to make his voice heard above the positive roar of conversation which rises from the three or four hundred men present. How can it be supposed that a nervous man should overcome this terrible obstacle in the way of his success as a speaker? Considerable experience has convinced the present writer that in no assembly in the world is it more difficult for a man to gain a hearing or to make a mark than in the House of Lords. What is to be hoped of the House, however, which will turn its back upon a Duke, and silence a Marquis in a din of contemptuous conversation?

The Earl of Carnarvon, like many another peer, has suffered not a little from the positive rudeness—for it can be called nothing else—of the House of which he is a member. For instance, in the debate on the Irish Church Bill, Lord Carnarvon, who made a speech which was at least worthy of being listened to, was unable to make himself heard above the tumult of talk which was being carried on around him. Even a personal appeal to a noble Duke, who, seated on the front Opposition bench, was speaking much louder than Lord Carnarvon, produced no effect, and the unfortunate Earl had in consequence to rush through his speech as rapidly as possible, followed only by the distracted reporters, who were in vain endeavouring to distinguish his voice above the hum which filled the House.

It is to be regretted that a peer who unites with Lord Carnarvon's admirable personal qualities the nervousness and physical weakness of which we have spoken, should be compelled to undergo such an ordeal as this. The circumstance, however, accounts in a great measure for the fact that the Earl, who intellectually occupies one of the highest places in the House of Lords, has never taken that place in its debates to which he is undoubtedly entitled. Let us hope that increasing experience will give him increasing confidence. And may we not also hope that the House of Lords may, in course of time, be induced so far to amend its customs, as to give to nervous or inexperienced speakers that chance of distinguishing themselves which they do not at present enjoy?





EARL RUSSELL.

THAT Earl RUSSELL can look back upon one of the most brilliant and successful careers ever run by a statesman in modern times, is a point which no one can dispute. The legislative achievements which the man who had the honour of moving the great Reform Bill in the House of Commons can count as his own, fill many pages of the Statute Book, and have altered the whole course of our national life.

The Lord John Russell of the first sixty years of the century, and the Earl Russell of later days, has had a finger in almost every dish prepared by Parliament for more than half-a-century. He has meddled with everything, and though he has muddled not a few things, it would be simple affectation to deny that he has gained many very memorable successes in the conflict of parties. Fifty years ago he began to fight the battle of Parliamentary Reform, and down to the memorable year 1867, he may almost be said to have stood *in loco parentis* towards that now venerable legislative bantling.

As a young man he fought the battle of Reform with a great amount of very unnecessary self-assertion ; as a man of tolerably mature age, he was its champion in the hour of triumph, and as an old man

he once more came forward in the same cause, once more insisted upon calling the attention of the House of Commons to the question of its own improvement, and shed actual tears of bitter grief when he found that he was unable to induce our legislators even to listen to the proposals which he had to make to them on the subject.

But Reform has been only one of many causes with which he has identified himself at one period or another of his long career. The Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Roman Catholic Emancipation, the Admission of Jews to Parliament, the Amendment of the Marriage Laws, the Revision of the Criminal Code, the Reform of our Municipalities, the Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, Irish Tithes, the English Church, Free Trade, Non-intervention : these are but a few of the questions in the discussion of which a prominent part has been taken by the nobleman of whom Sydney Smith said that he was 'the Lycurgus of the Lower House, and his moral courage was such that he was ready at a moment's notice to take the command of the Channel Fleet, or to perform an operation in lithotomy.'

The day has passed in which anyone can either sneer at or misrepresent Lord Russell's legislative achievements. They were undoubtedly very remarkable achievements, and quite sufficient of themselves to prove that their author was a man worthy of a place in the first rank of English statesmen. But when we go through the long list of the Earl's public acts ; when we read the speeches which he made fifty years ago, on behalf of causes dear to the English people, and when we trace his course through the half-century

which has since elapsed, our wonder is that a man who has undoubtedly done so much, and who has deserved so well of his countrymen, should have enjoyed so little personal popularity, and so small an amount of private sympathy and esteem.

Take up the political cartoons of the last thirty years, and you will find no one whom the pictorial satirist has so frequently sought to make ridiculous as Lord Russell. Turn over the leaves of a file of the *Times*, or any other journal of professedly Liberal opinions, and you will find no one—not even the most staunch of Tory statesmen—who is so often rebuked, so often admonished, so often abused, as the man who since the days of the Duke of Wellington's administration has been one of the most prominent members of the Liberal party. How comes it that this is the case? How is it that John, Earl Russell, despite his great public services, and despite all that he has done for the party with which he is identified, and the abundant success that has attended his political life, is yet one who can hardly be called a great man in the highest sense of the term?

Partly this is unquestionably to be attributed to the fact that Lord Russell has throughout his life been a victim to that cold *hauteur* which seems to be one of the sacred traditions of true Whiggism. This *hauteur* has nothing in common with the ordinary and natural pride of aristocratic birth, or high social position. Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston were both proud men, and against one of them, at least, it was made a matter of serious accusation that his demeanour was haughty and 'aristocratic.' But there was nothing in either of these men of the offensive stiffness

which has constantly characterised Lord Russell, and which was so prominent a feature in the characters of many of the leading Whig statesmen of the past century. Few could ever become enthusiastic about 'Lord John,' or if anyone were rash enough to be tempted into momentary enthusiasm, the ebullition was instantly checked by a chilling word, or look, or letter.

We have at this moment before us a vivid recollection of a characteristic little incident in the Earl's career. Seven or eight years ago he spent a few weeks in the autumn in the neighbourhood of the Perthshire village of Blairgowrie, and the sturdy Scotch peasantry, resolving to do honour to the great Liberal statesman, invited him to a 'banquet' at Blairgowrie. The writer happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time, and procuring a ticket for the banquet—which was about the roughest village feast at which he was ever present—he went to Blairgowrie to witness Lord Russell's reception. In due time the famous Whig minister came. The people were delighted at having him in their midst, and they cheered him with a lusty vigour which would have done credit to Yorkshire lungs.

At the door of the Town Hall, or the Market House, which was the scene of the banquet, the Earl descended from his carriage; he stood a moment in the doorway, giving some directions to his servants, and the crowd pressed round him cheering. One respectable-looking man who was standing very near was particularly enthusiastic. Upon him the Earl turned with a freezing look and a haughty gesture. 'Have the goodness not to make such a noise, sir!'

said he, and the poor Scot shrunk away utterly abashed, and with doubtless very different feelings with respect to 'Johnny Russell' from those which he had entertained towards him a few minutes previously. And this was a most characteristic scene. Very vain, and not at all insensible to the charms of popular applause, Lord Russell has yet this peculiar coldness and haughtiness of manner which chills the enthusiasm of his admirers, and deprives him of not a little of the popularity which is undoubtedly his due.

But in addition to this the Earl has all his life long been possessed by an over-weening jealousy, which of itself would have been sufficient to prove fatal to the reputation of a man who had done less than he has accomplished in the service of his country. How many times has 'Johnny upset the coach'? We must go back to the very beginning of his political career in order to give an answer to this question. Nay, we must wait until that career is finished before we can be satisfied that the answer is a complete one. He believes himself able to accomplish anything. No administrative task appears to him to be beyond his own powers. And he has just as great a disbelief of the abilities of others as he has confidence in his own. Thus he has again and again stood in the way of the cause to which he has professed throughout his life so warm a devotion; and he has more than once sacrificed the interests of party to personal pride or pique.

It is melancholy to have to write in this strain of a man who has worked so hard, so long, and with such conspicuous ability in the service of the public; but the truth must be told, and this is the simple truth.

He was jealous of Lord Palmerston, until Lord Palmerston's superior personal gifts gave him an influence over his party which even Lord Russell could not dispute. He has always been jealous of Lord Granville, whose tact and geniality are the very qualities which he himself so conspicuously lacks; and he is even to this day jealous of Mr. Gladstone, with an unnatural jealousy which old age seems to have made even more bitter than were the jealousies of his youth.

It is strange indeed that Lord Russell should ever be making mischief, and ever doing his best to upset the coach. We have no need to go far back in order to see how persevering have been his efforts to embarrass his party, not upon one question only, but apparently upon any question which seemed to give him the opportunity of making mischief. There is something almost amusing in the cold-blooded way in which he will get up, and with as much deliberation as though he were pronouncing a set oration before the members of one of the Universities, deliver himself of a speech, the sole result of which—as he himself is perfectly aware—must be to embarrass, nay, even to destroy, the prospects of his party.

The Earl seems all his life long to have looked upon politicians and political parties as worms beneath his feet, or as a set of chessmen, to be knocked about and shuffled into a corner with as little ceremony as the player shows in handling his ivory soldiers. He has acted upon certain well-defined principles; he has been 'the consistent friend of civil and religious liberty'—no one will deny that—but what have been

his feelings towards the people who have benefited by his exertions? In what light does he view the operatives, the Dissenters, the Roman Catholics, the Jews, on whose behalf he has interested himself? Can the Grand Mogul have a more haughty contempt for the meanest of his subjects than John, Earl Russell, has, for the clients whose cause he has fought for sixty years with such marked ability? We doubt whether he even 'remembers that they are vertebrated animals.'

This is unquestionably to be attributed not only to his own peculiar mental temperament, but to the extent to which he is imbued with the spirit of Whiggism. His political principles are part of his hereditary property. For a Russell to be anything but the friend of Liberalism—taking the word in its current meaning—would appear to him to be something altogether unnatural. He would as soon—possibly even he would rather—see the entail of the Woburn estates cut off, and the estates themselves brought to the hammer, and sold to one of those newly-enriched men for whom he has, theoretically, so high an esteem, and, practically, so unutterable a contempt.

Let him not be denied the credit which is his due, however. Lord Russell is hardly a great man in the highest sense of the word, but in some matters he holds a higher position than any other of his contemporaries. As an authority upon all questions affecting the constitution, for instance, he is, undoubtedly, the highest we have; and it is a genuine treat to hear him laying down the law upon one of these questions. He does so with judicial clearness, and with more than judicial force. Upon

many questions of administrative reform, too, the country is more largely indebted to him than to any other statesman of modern times. His active brain, his restless industry, and his constant desire to be doing something which shall keep him before the eyes of his fellow-countrymen, have led him again and again to take in hand great works from which other statesmen had shrunk; whilst his self-confidence and his genuine ability combined have enabled him to conduct many of those works to a successful issue.

It was an evil day—evil for himself, evil for his country, and evil for some foreign Powers—in which Lord Russell became English Foreign Secretary. From first to last his foreign policy has been an unfortunate one, and it has also been one which, had England not accepted the doctrine of non-intervention, would have led us into some very serious scrapes.

When he was Home Secretary or Prime Minister we had him to ourselves, and we understood him. We took his letters—what a host of them he has given to us!—for just as much as they were worth, and no more. We made allowances for his constant love of intermeddling; and we could even forgive his chilling personal *hauteur*. But it was different when he was representative of England in its relations with foreign courts. The Poles, the Danes, the Russians, could hardly be expected to understand the peculiarities of our Foreign Secretary; and even when his letters were as innocent as those of Mr. Toots himself, they believed that all the big words they contained, all the advice they offered, or rather thrust upon foreign Powers, meant something more than they

really did. They had no conception that, unless he were prepared to support his words by deeds, a minister would venture to sit down in his room in Whitehall, and calmly pen despatches dictating, in language which itself was almost offensive, to some of the most powerful States in Europe, and holding out open encouragement to struggling causes. Thus it happened that Lord Russell got us into some very humiliating scrapes during his tenure of the Foreign Office, and did not a little to efface the impression which his great success in matters of domestic policy had made upon the minds of his countrymen.

During the American War the course which he took was a thoroughly characteristic one. He was right in his policy. He maintained to the best of his ability a strict neutrality in his dealings with the contending States. But his manner was as offensive as it was possible to be towards both parties. The aristocratic Whig has always looked upon the United States as the home of a few rough colonists, men whom it would be humiliating to regard as a political power.

In all his dealings with the Federals during the war, Lord Russell displayed this prejudice. He would send for Mr. Adams at all times to convey to him his opinion upon the course of events in language which the American Minister himself has described as offensive; and not even his official position prevented his describing the contest in his celebrated speech at Newcastle in language which appeared to convey an open expression of sympathy to the Southerners. Was he endeavouring to 'hedge,' we wonder? If so, he lacked the foresight which enabled Mr. Disraeli,

for instance, to see so clearly from the very first, not only the true meaning of the struggle, but the result which was inevitable. Upon the whole, England has reason to be thankful that it is never again likely to see Lord Russell either at the head of affairs, or controlling the Foreign Office. And yet there is good reason to believe that the Earl himself has not abandoned all hopes of a return to official life.

Who does not know the personal characteristics of Lord Russell? Who has not seen the square and stunted figure, the large head, the big mouth, the pugnacious nose? No one who enters the House of Lords can mistake his identity. He sits below the gangway on the Liberal side of the House, his head and features almost hidden by a huge broad-brimmed hat. It appears to be a veritable Cave of Adullam which he has formed for himself in this part of the House. Here he is joined at times by Lord Clanricarde, Lord Westbury, or other discontented Liberals, and with them he holds frequent conversations in a voice which almost drowns that of the man who is supposed to have possession of the House for the time being. When he rises to speak, he places his hat upon the seat behind him, clasps his hands behind his back, turns away from the reporters, and says what he has to say in a grumbling monotone.

His speech has become so indistinct now, that but little of what he says reaches the peers on the other side of the House, and men like Lord Grey, who do not care much for appearances, and who still regard Lord Russell's utterances as important, will seat themselves close to him whilst he is speaking, and, with hand to ear, endeavour to catch all that he says. It

does not appear, however, that it is from inability to speak clearly and distinctly that he makes his speeches in this unsatisfactory manner. It would rather seem that it is from sheer contempt for the people he is addressing ; since, when he chooses, he can speak out in such a manner as to make himself heard all over the House. When he does this, he allows those present to witness once again the old-fashioned peculiarities of pronunciation which have always distinguished him.

Time was, however, when he was really one of the ablest speakers in either house of Parliament. He could never pretend to be an orator ; but he was a quick and ready debater ; and his exposition of great questions was both clear and powerful. Yet, in his best days, there was something chilling in his oratory, something, which led even those who were most favourably inclined towards the political opinions which he expounded, to regard the speaker himself almost with disfavour. If Lord Russell had been, in his relations with the public, a more genial and amiable man, he would have been at once more popular and more successful than he has proved as a statesman.





LORD JOHN MANNERS.

IT is just eight-and-twenty years since the clubs and drawing-rooms of London were ringing with a question to which everybody was expected to give one answer. Men who are middle-aged in the year of grace upon which we have now entered can hardly be expected to recall all the events which agitated society so far back in the Victorian era as the spring of 1844, but not a few of them will nevertheless remember that in that year 'Coningsby' was published, and that everybody in society was asking everybody else whether he or she had read 'Coningsby,' and was duly astounded if any answer but one in the affirmative was given.

It is hard now to understand the sensation which this brilliant romance, from the pen of the ambitious member for Shrewsbury, produced in the political world. We read the tale now with lively pleasure and admiration, but we can affirm without fear of contradiction that had it issued from the press in the present season, the number of copies subscribed for by Mr. Mudie would not have been overwhelming, and the excitement produced by its appearance in Pall Mall and St. James' Street would have been the reverse of extraordinary.

The case was different in 1844, however. Everybody read 'Coningsby,' and everybody talked about it. A few praised, and many abused the work. The critics lashed the author with more than their accustomed vigour, and the pamphlets and 'advertisements' published against both author and book, helped to keep up the excitement. Nay, to such an extent did it go, that some gentleman—apparently an ambitious journalist—followed up the original work by a caricature, which under the title of 'Anti-Coningsby,' met with a very moderate success.

How was it that this story of a young man's experience in the great world of fashion and politics produced so deep and wide-spread a sensation? The explanation is a simple one. It was not the plot, or the style, or the wit, or the polished sarcasm of the volume, which drew all readers to it. It was the fact that those who opened its pages believed that they found in them, drawn by a master's hand, sketches—caricatures if you like, photographs if you will—of the leading statesmen of the day. At first each reader exercised his own ingenuity, and his personal knowledge of the political world, in order to discover for himself the identity of the various characters portrayed in the fiction.

It was a pleasant and exciting task to discover the real name of the Marquis of Monmouth, of Mr. Jawster Sharp, or Mr. Rigby. The man who had hit upon the identity of any of these personages rushed off to his club with the conviction that he was a benefactor to his race, and hastened to pour his secret into the ears of his companions of the morning, or the smoking-room. Ere long, however, this pro-

cess of individual exertion in the great task appeared to have unsatisfactory results, and then there appeared—what do our readers think?—a ‘Key to Coningsby,’ by which the dullest member of the world of fashion was enabled to see at a glance who was who in the fascinating and daring romance.

Very curious is it to glance now-a-days over one of these ‘Keys’ (for more than one appeared) to the political novel which ‘B. Disraeli, Esq., M.P.’ had given to the world. If they satisfy the reader of nothing else, they must at least convince him of the wonderful ingenuity of their authors. Everybody in ‘Coningsby,’ down even to ‘Boots’ at Eton, was shown to be somebody else. Sidonia, the wonderful Hebrew, who had ‘mastered *all* arts, *all* languages, *all* sciences,’ who had been everywhere and seen everything, and penetrated the hearts of everybody, was shown to the world as ‘Baron Alfred de Rothschild of Naples;’ Mr. Jawster Sharp was ‘John Bright, Esq., M.P. ;’ the Marquis of Monmouth was a nobleman whom Thackeray subsequently presented to the world under the title of Lord Steyne—the Marquis of Hertford; Coningsby himself was the amiable peer who is now known as Lord Lyttelton; Oswald Milbank, the twin hero of the story, was ‘W. E. Gladstone, Esq., M.P.’ (!); Vere was Lord Edward Howard; and the infamous Rigby was —; well, at this point the ‘Keys’ left a discreet blank, which the world immediately filled up with the name of Mr. J. Wilson Croker, for some time Secretary to the Admiralty.

There ~~was~~, of course, not a little reason to doubt the accuracy of these different keys. After the lapse

of a quarter of a century, it is difficult to find how even a malicious ingenuity could have discovered under the disguise of Mr. Jawster Sharp, for instance, the character of Mr. Bright, or how even a panegyrist could prove that all the virtues of Oswald Milbank were embodied in Mr. Gladstone. Nevertheless, there was one character, and that not the least important in the story, as to the identity of which there could be no question. The resemblance was too strong, the incidental allusions too marked, to permit of any doubt.

Altho who read 'Coningsby' saw in Lord Henry Sidney a portrait, remarkable for its fidelity, of Lord John Manners, at that time the rising young member for Newark. Those of our readers who have recently renewed their acquaintance with 'Coningsby' will remember that Lord Henry, the bosom friend of Coningsby, is represented as one of the leading spirits of the Young England party, and as having, in his desire to maintain old customs and the spirit of olden times, been sorely grieved when he found that a hard-hearted bench of magistrates struck out of a petition, which he had prepared for their acceptance, the word 'peasantry,' and substituted 'labourers' in its place. They will remember, too, his warm discussions with his brother-in-law respecting the poor-laws, and his open advocacy of the restoration of village maypoles, as one of the means of promoting the happiness of the poor.

All these points are but reproductions of well-known incidents in the early career of Lord John Manners. Nay, beside us, as we write, lies a little volume, entitled 'A Plea for National Holydays,' and

published in 1843, reading which we seem to be listening to a dissertation, not from Lord John Manners, whose name the pamphlet bears, but from the Lord Henry Sidney of Mr. Disraeli's story. In this 'Plea' we find strong reasons urged for the setting-up of the maypole on our village greens, and for a return to the innocent sports which made the festivals of the Church pleasant and useful holidays in the days of Charles the First.

The theory of the Young England school was a decidedly romantic one. Now-a-days, with our Household Suffrage Parliament, our National Education League, and all the other blessings of advancing democracy, we may sneer at the enthusiastic young men of thirty years ago, who believed that they possessed a simple but unfailing panacea for the political discontent and social misery of the lower orders of society. Our newspapers may snarl at the amiable poet who wrote about 'the kind pressure of the social chain;' and Mr. Odger may exhaust himself in his endeavour to prove by illustrative facts that all members of the aristocracy who profess to feel a friendly interest in the welfare of 'the people' are hypocrites and snakes in the grass. Those, however, who choose to go back for the lifetime of a generation to make themselves acquainted with the state of affairs when 'Coningsby' was published, will, we fancy, whatever may be their politics, acquire some feeling of respect for the Young Englanders of that day. Let it be remembered that those were the times when the state of our factories was worst; when the very lives of the children of the poor were being ground out of them by the iron wheels which they daily tended;

when dear bread, unremitting labour, and a novel and rigorous system of poor-law relief, combined to make the condition of the working-classes almost intolerable.

All men who desired to promote the welfare of their country, and to relieve the misery which existed to so large an extent amongst our population, were bent upon discovering the panacea which it seemed certain was somewhere to be found. The Young England politicians of that day may not have been gifted with the highest wisdom ; some of the remedies which they proposed may appear to us now ludicrous and absurd ; but, at least, they were honestly bent, not so much upon gaining political advantages for themselves, as upon relieving the pressing wants of the nation.

Fired by the enthusiasm of youth, misled doubtless by the prejudices which they had imbibed at home, at school, and at college, and sanguine in their ardour and their inexperience, they imagined that they saw in the equalizing tendencies of commercial progress the real cause of existing evils, and they fancied that if England could be forced back to the state of things which existed amongst us when each great nobleman had his special retainers, when the poor depended for support and succour upon the great, and when the great acknowledged their claims, and satisfied their demands, the country would witness a revived prosperity and a renewed social harmony.

So they banded themselves together and set out upon a political campaign, in which not a few of them succeeded in gaining seats in Parliament, and in which more than one man who has since risen to the

first rank in politics enjoyed his earliest experience in the conflicts of the political arena.

Lord John Manners, the second son of the Duke of Rutland, was at once the leader and the poet laureate of the party. What manner of man the Lord John Manners of that day was, those who read 'Coningsby' will discover. Amiable, accomplished, enthusiastic, pure-minded, fired with devotion to his country and his religion, the young man was just such a hero as youth chooses for itself, and as the novelist loves to depict. No one who came in contact with him failed to perceive that his life was full of promise; most persons believed that he had before him a career not of distinction merely, but of the highest political glory. He was the hope of the band of chosen spirits who had gathered round him at school and at college, and shrewd judges imagined that they saw in him the future leader of a great party.

Looking back for the thirty years which have passed since then, it seems to us that at that time there was no young man of the day whose career promised so much as did that of Lord John Manners. We know how strangely that promise has remained unfulfilled.

Whilst the brilliant novelist, at whom the wise men of Pall Mall sneered as 'too clever by half,' has grasped the political blue riband, and stood upon the steps of the throne; whilst the plebeian merchant's son, who entered the race about the same time, has followed in his footsteps, and attained the same distinction, the young nobleman, who in addition to ~~fascinating~~ fascinating natural gifts, and a spirit as noble as it was gentle, possessed the influence of high rank

and of vast possessions, has been 'nowhere' in the later stages of the race upon which he entered with so many hopes, and such apparent certainty of success. Nay, he has not even reached the honour of rank as a Cabinet Minister. He is an 'outsider' in the struggle in which he has all his life been engaged.

It is painful, sometimes, to dwell upon lives which, at their opening full of promise, have seemed ere they closed to be brought to naught. But there is nothing painful in the review of the career of Lord John Manners. It is due to no personal defect on his part, to no falling away from the high standard which he had set before himself, that the comparative failure of his political life is to be attributed. All through the thirty years during which he has occupied a place in public life he has been true to his principles and true to himself. He has been the consistent friend of the lower orders, and the consistent advocate of Conservative principles. He has preserved, even to this day, the admirable courtesy, the unfailing gentleness of spirit, which distinguished him as a youth.

It is due, however, in part, to his very faithfulness to the traditions and sentiments of his younger days, that he has been so much of an outsider in the political race. No one can doubt that the world has advanced by many a long mile from the point at which it stood when the Young Englanders came forth to the help of the masses; and what was then a hope not altogether unreasonable has now become nothing more substantial than a dream, or a landscape in the sunset clouds. Those members of the Young England school, therefore, who have been

truest to the generous principles and the high impulses with which they started, have found themselves the furthest removed from the centre of political interest, and of the least account in that strife of politics in which principle has so often to be sacrificed to expediency, and in which there seems to be absolutely no room for the realization of even the dullest of the visions of the optimist.

So it happens that Lord John Manners, as we see him to-day—a grave, stately gentleman, of thoughtful, even melancholy expression of countenance—has by his very consistency been put into the background in the struggle, and has been eclipsed by those who once looked up to him with admiration, and even with reverence. He sits on the front Opposition bench, in virtue of the fact that he has thrice held the post of First Commissioner of Works; but he has never held higher office than that which is now held by Mr. Ayrton! No one who knows Lord John, no one who has heard him speak in the House of Commons, will venture to deny that before now posts of greater importance than that which he has held have been conferred upon men who have no pretensions to the ability which he undoubtedly possesses. But his modesty and his unmoved devotion to traditions which have ceased to retain the hold they once had upon the heart of the English people, but which are not the less noble on that account, more than explain his exclusion from high office.

As it is, he fitly represents that chivalrous sentiment which induced the members of some of our noblest families, thirty years ago, to exert themselves in the effort to heal the great breach which time and

circumstances had made between the upper and the lower orders of society, and to lend a helping hand to the suffering poor. That they failed was no fault of theirs; and their cause, both in the noble spirit by which it was animated, and in the comparative want of success which attended it, could have no better representative than Lord John Manners.

The sturdiest Radical can feel a certain measure of respect as he thinks of the Young England school and its best representatives. He may have no respect for those who were once prominent in its councils, but who long ago discovered that they were on the wrong tack, and set their sails in another direction, that they might catch the breath of popular applause. But for a man like Lord John Manners the critic must be hard indeed if he fails to entertain a genuine respect. Not very wise, or very profound, and certainly not now at all brilliant, he has yet something about him which commands esteem and liking. He has been true to his early convictions; and though we may smile at those convictions, we cannot afford to smile at his consistency.

And let us enter our protest against the harshness with which Lord John Manners has too often been treated by a hard-hearted public. One would have thought that his political career had been such as to preserve him from the attacks of personal opponents. But Lord John Manners committed a single act of indiscretion in his youth, which he has never been allowed to forget; and we have sometimes seen him held up to ridicule in journals of the highest standing as a specimen of the aristocratic oppressor of the common people! The only ground for the attacks

upon him, which used to be very common when he was in office, and which we still sometimes see, lies in the fact that when a very young man—barely three-and-twenty—Lord John, who was, as we have said, the poet-laureate of the Young*England party, published after the fashion of that day a volume of poems called ‘England’s Trust,’ in which volume appeared a couplet which has been quoted more frequently than any couplet written during the last forty years by any English poet. The two lines which have thus achieved a singular and unexampled notoriety are these :

‘ Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
But leave us still our old nobility.’

There can hardly be one amongst our readers who has not read a score of times versions, more or less accurate, of these too-famous lines, accompanied by the rasping comments of indignant, or scornful, or outraged critics.

It is thirty years since these lines were written, but within the last few months we have seen more than one allusion to them in the newspapers, more than one scoff of virtuous indignation at the sentiments which they express. Well ; we are willing to admit that their sentiment is as faulty as their metre ; but we put it to our friends of the press whether this juvenile couplet deserves all the reprobation that has been lavished upon it, and whether it is worth while now-a-days to go back to the year 1842, in order to find this ground for an indictment against Lord John Manners and the whole of the aristocracy. We might go further, and ask the critics

of Lord John Manners whether they have not found in the effusions of one 'Parson Lot' sentiments at least as deserving of rebuke, and as void of common-sense as that at which, for more than a quarter of a century, they have not ceased to jeer and sneer? They have forgiven Mr. Kingsley for writing ranting trash in the 'Parson Lot' days. We hope, and we believe, that they have overlooked the extravagance and the mischievousness of his sentiments for the sake of the cause on behalf of which they were uttered. Will they not admit that it was the same cause on behalf of which Lord John Manners was labouring when he wrote 'England's Trust?' He and his party were the forerunners of the Christian Socialists, and the active philanthropists of a later day. It is true that their principles and their traditions differed widely from those of the men who came after them. But all had one common object. All sought to raise the poor from the abyss of misery and degradation into which they had fallen. Nay, there was this much in common between the Christian Socialists and the Young Englanders, that both, in the blind enthusiasm of youth, blamed the hard laws of political economy for the suffering which they saw, around them, and believed that it was possible to arrest the progress of these laws, or to divert their course by the provision of a sentimental remedy. Surely, it is possible now to be as generous to Lord John Manners as to Mr. Kingsley; as just to the man who believed that the poor were to be saved by the aid of the aristocracy, as to the man who fancied he was delivering them from untold evils when he fulminated against cheap tailors!

As, however, the lines written by Lord John Manners in the little volume to which we have referred are so well-known, and have been so frequently quoted, whilst the book itself is rare and unknown, we think it may interest our readers if we extract from it a passage which gives a clearer idea of the spirit of the leading poem than the couplet we have quoted :—

‘ Then did each high hereditary lord
Sit at the head of his own princely board,
Where sat the stranger and the menial crew,
Who owed him fealty and affection too.

* * * * *

Each knew his place—king, peasant, peer, or priest—
The greatest owned connection with the least ;
From rank to rank the generous feeling ran,
And linked society as man to man.
Gone are those days, and gone the ties that then
Bound peers and gentry to their fellow-men.
Now in their place behold the modern slave,
Doomed from the very cradle to the grave
To tread his lonely path of care and toil ;
Bound in sad truth, and bowed down to the soil,
He dies and leaves his sons their heritage—
Work for their prime, the workhouse for their age.

* * * * *

Oh ! would some noble dare again to raise
The feudal banner of forgotten days,
And live despising slander’s harmless hate,
The potent ruler of his petty state !
Then would the different classes once again
Feel the kind pressure of the social chain,
And in their mutual wants and hopes confess,
How close allied the little to the less !’

Our enlightened age will doubtless sneer at the creed thus expressed in Lord John’s youthful rhymes ; but, if it is just, it will confess that that creed, like the man who professed it, is at least kindly and honourable, and well-intentioned.



MR. CARDWELL.

MR. CARDWELL may be regarded as the model Peelite of the House of Commons. He is not, of course, the first, or the most brilliant, or the most powerful of the men who formed Sir Robert Peel's personal following more than twenty years ago. Foremost amongst those men, who now survive, is, we need hardly say, the present Prime Minister.

Mr. Gladstone had risen to high office, and had won a powerful place in the House of Commons before Mr. Cardwell had taken his seat in that assemblage. But Mr. Gladstone, though once a Peelite, can no more, at this moment, be considered a representative Peelite than a representative Conservative.

Mr. Cardwell, on the other hand, has developed but little since he first became known to fame as one of Sir Robert's disciples. If he was not one of the most eminent, he was at least one of the most ardent of his followers; and to this day men in the political world appear to regard him as the rightful wearer of the mantle which dropped from the great statesman's shoulders when he prematurely passed away.

On the back benches on his own side of the House Mr. Cardwell is, from this very circumstance, regarded with marked suspicion. We have again and again

heard from gentlemen below the gangway denunciations of Mr. Cardwell's timidity. There was a profound feeling of distrust entertained for him by a considerable section of the Radical party, at the time he went to the War Office. Men had not then begun to talk about army reorganisation, and the purchase system seemed to be a long way from its doom. Even then, however, there were many men in the Liberal ranks who were urging on a change in the administration of the army—such a change as would make it not merely more efficient in organisation, but more democratic also.

Now to these men Mr. Cardwell appeared to be merely a refined, timid, and somewhat cold-blooded politician, whose sympathies, if there was anything in his nature so warm as sympathy, were with Conservative rather than Radical principles. On the other side of the House he was regarded as rather a commonplace man, who would have been a more capable administrator if he had possessed somewhat more firmness of bearing and decision of character than that with which he appeared to be gifted. There was much that was erroneous, mingled with some truth, in these estimates.

It has been Mr. Cardwell's lot to be tried more severely, perhaps, than any other member of the present administration; and it is bare justice to him to say that he has revealed some qualities which men hardly expected to find in him, and which seem to justify the persistent loyalty with which Mr. Gladstone has clung to him through good and evil report. For instance—although we cannot dispute that Mr. Cardwell's affinities are rather

towards Conservatism than towards Radicalism—when the moment had come for the abolition of purchase, he could be as ‘revolutionary’ in his proposals as Mr. Trevelyan or Mr. Fawcett themselves. Then, again, although there has been almost from time immemorial an outcry about his want of firmness and decision, the weary and irritating debates which took place in the House of Commons on the Army Bill showed that he had plenty of both.

Whatever men may think about the policy which he had then to defend against the incessant assaults of the colonels, they cannot deny that he did his work both firmly, patiently, and gently; and that when it was all over, he was able to tell an audience at Oxford that he had consoled himself, when he was being most sorely assailed by his military opponents, with the thought of the valour and persistency which these same men would display in attacking a national instead of a political enemy!

Mr. Cardwell's career bears in some respects a resemblance to that of the man who is at the present moment his political leader, and the head of the Cabinet of which he is a member. Like Mr. Gladstone, the Secretary for War is the son of a Liverpool merchant. Like him, he completed his education at Oxford, and won honourable distinction in his academic studies. There was, however, this difference between the two, that whereas Mr. Gladstone obtained a seat as member for Newark in 1832, it was not until exactly ten years later that Mr. Cardwell succeeded in finding his way into the House of Commons. Before that time he had married, whilst still very young, and immediately after his marriage

had been called to the bar, and had joined the Northern Circuit. For nearly four years he pursued the not very lively or profitable calling of a briefless barrister.

In 1841, however, when he was just beginning to make his way in the profession he had adopted, a chance offered itself to him of gratifying the ambition which almost every young man of Mr. Cardwell's ability and training must entertain—the ambition of finding a career in the service of the public in the House of Commons. A vacancy occurred for Clitheroe, an insignificant Lancashire borough, and he resolved to become a candidate. He did so, and was defeated by a majority of five votes. He petitioned against the return of his successful competitor, however, and succeeded in gaining the seat. Strange to say, this was not the only time in his political career during which he was indebted to a similar combination for a seat in the House of Commons. Mr. Cardwell has been for many years member for Oxford. At one of the general elections, however, another candidate was successful in winning the favour of the constituency, and Mr. Cardwell was shut out of Parliament. On that occasion, also, he procured the seat through the agency of a committee of the House of Commons.

Entered upon his political career, Mr. Cardwell attached himself to the party of Sir Robert Peel, and he early succeeded in winning the favourable notice of that great statesman. The speeches which he made were attentively listened to, and before long he was regarded as a rising man in the House. In 1845 he was introduced to official life under Peel's auspices,

in the position of Joint-Secretary to the Treasury, whilst in 1847 he enjoyed the high distinction of being called away from Clitheroe to represent his native place, the great town of Liverpool. If any proof were needed of the feelings entertained towards him by his chief, it is to be found in the fact that, by the will of Sir Robert Peel, he was named one of that statesman's political executors.

It is needless to pursue his political career through its various vicissitudes from this point down to the present hour. That it has been one remarkable for its success cannot be denied. Within ten years of his first admission to the House of Commons Mr. Cardwell had gained the signal honour of a seat in the Cabinet, having been appointed President of the Board of Trade by Lord Aberdeen. Since that time he has been successively Chief Secretary for Ireland, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and Secretary of State for War. He has thus held some of the most important offices in the State, and has had the amplest opportunity for convincing the world that his elevation is to be attributed, not to private interests or personal influence, but to his own intrinsic merits as a statesman.

We dare not affirm that he has entirely satisfied the public upon this point. Somehow or other Mr. Cardwell's merits have always been '*caviare* to the general.' We have spoken of the almost open mistrust which used to be felt with respect to him by the more advanced members on his own side of the House, and of the feeling, not unlike contempt, entertained for him by many of his political opponents. It cannot be said that he has ever been thoroughly popular;

that he has ever aroused much enthusiasm ; or that there has ever been that general confidence in him which not a few other statesmen have enjoyed. But, on the other hand, those who have known him best have esteemed him most. His colleagues will always be found to speak of him as a most capable administrator—cautious, patient, shrewd, painstaking, and thoroughly loyal. It is their estimate of his qualities, rather than that of the general public, which has led to his elevation to the high political rank which he has so long enjoyed, and their judgment is, on the whole, worth more than that of Mr. Fawcett or Mr. Vernon Harcourt.

Moreover, Mr Cardwell has some merits which are very plain to the world. His speeches are usually clear and elegant ; he has a somewhat persuasive manner in addressing the House, which is not without its value ; and that he is a man of refinement and high personal honour, none can doubt. His knowledge of political questions is singularly wide, and his judgment upon such questions is, in the main, essentially fair and accurate. Inside his office it is no exaggeration to say that he is regarded with a feeling of absolute affection. Those who know Government offices must be well aware that the post occupied by a Radical Minister in the War Office cannot be called a bed of roses. But Mr. Cardwell, we believe, has won the esteem of the clerks in Pall Mall in a very remarkable way. Amid the many changes which have been witnessed since he took the office which he now holds, he has been uniformly careful of the interests of his subordinates, and has gained for them some concessions which they had sought in vain at the hands of other Ministers.

On the other hand, Mr. Cardwell labours under certain very visible drawbacks. We have spoken of the clearness of his statements, but it must not be imagined that he is a brilliant speaker. On the contrary, few things more painful, from an oratorical point of view, than his annual exposition of the Army Estimates can be conceived. Let the reader imagine a rather feeble-looking man, with white face, and very light yellowish hair, standing at the table of the House for three hours at a stretch, and talking for the whole of those three hours in a dull, even monotone, never varied, unless the speaker sinks into a scarcely audible whisper. It is a painful task to sit during these three hours, and listen to the Secretary for War, as he pours out his figures and facts, all lucidly arranged, but expounded in such a manner as to make them drier than the driest sermon. Certainly it is not to Mr. Cardwell's ability as a public speaker that he owes his rise in the political world. Then again, this dulness in speaking shows itself in other ways. He is always at the same level; never excited, never impassioned; never enthusiastic. Cold and frigid in his manner, he makes every subject with which he deals seem cold and frigid also, and one prays for a little of the fire which Mr. Gladstone or Mr. Hardy always have at their command. You lose patience with a man who is always the same; whose face under all circumstances wears the same placid air; whose voice at all times has the same flat and dreary tone; who goes through his work with much neatness and dexterity, but who cannot be induced to fall into a wholesome fit of passion, or to lose his temper.

What Mr. Cardwell is as an administrator it is

hardly possible at present to say. This is not the place in which to discuss last year's Army Bill, and as that measure is confessedly an imperfect one, and at the moment of writing the supplementary Bill has not been laid before the public, we cannot speak of his great scheme as a complete one. It is certain that so far it has met with but a limited popularity. No doubt men will be able to judge it more calmly and fairly after a season; but we shall doubtless have to wait until it is tested by experience, before pronouncing finally upon it. As it is, however, there are few persons who can resist a certain suspicion that a stronger and livelier man would have been decidedly better at the War Office. There, if anywhere in the service, a man is needed who has pluck and resolution; and though Mr. Cardwell is not, as we have seen, deficient in firmness or perseverance, it would perhaps be going too far to give him credit for pluck. He would rather at all times try to untie the Gordian knot than to cut it, and it is only under the strong pressure of circumstances that he consents to use the sword. Writing of him when he first took office, and foretelling that coming assault upon the existing organization of the army, which at that time comparatively few anticipated, we ventured to say, 'Unfortunately the coldness of his temperament, and the comparative colourlessness of his political creed, prevent his gathering round him any strong body of personal adherents, so that when the hour of trial comes, and the Secretary for War is submitted on the one hand to the rude assaults of Radical army reformers, and on the other to the opposition of the aristocratic and courtly interests of the ruling powers at the Horse Guards, he

will, we fear, fare badly. It is to be regretted that this is so, for personally Mr. Cardwell is an amiable and well-meaning man, who deserves all the credit attaching to long-continued public services, which, without being brilliant, may at least be described as respectable.'

That Mr. Cardwell has 'fared badly' in the encounter which time and the War of 1870 brought about, cannot be doubted. He has lived, like many another man, to be abused by everybody. Panic-mongers and economists have alike attacked him, and army officers and army reformers have joined hands in their onslaughts upon him. But upon one point we were wrong. His personal friends have stood firmly by him; and seeing that they comprise the most influential members of the present Government, we need not wonder that he has withstood the storm, and that he still remains among us, not merely the representative Peelite of the present Administration, but the War Minister who has carried out a revolution in the organization of the army.

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LORD HATHERLEY.

THERE is hardly, in the whole gallery of political portraiture which embraces the men of the present generation, a figure upon which the spectator can look with more unalloyed satisfaction than that of Lord Hatherley.

There have been more brilliant lawyers, more eloquent orators, more effective debaters, than Lord Hatherley, upon the woolsack. High as are his legal attainments and intellectual powers, they are yet eclipsed by those of more than one of his contemporaries. Splendid as is the position which it has been his good fortune to achieve, his upward struggle has, nevertheless, been neither so arduous nor so rapid in its achievement of success as that of his immediate predecessor in the office which he now holds. The ambitious barrister, who believes that the great prize of his profession is not wholly beyond his reach, would hardly set Lord Hatherley before his eyes as an example to be followed, if he would attain that prize. Nevertheless, it is not the less true that there are few public careers which can command the respect of all men in an equal degree with that of William Page Wood. To him, through a long career — a career which has now passed the threescore years and ten of

the Psalmist—has it been given to ‘wear the white flower of a blameless life;’ and thus to add to high mental attainments the yet higher beauties of moral excellence.

The life of William Page Wood has not been an unchequered one. In his early youth he was a citizen of London, and many of his years were passed within the narrow limits of that circle which has the Mansion House for its centre and Temple Bar for one of the points of its circumference. And it was his good fortune, in being associated with the municipal life of the City of London, to be connected with the first of its citizens.

Who that knows anything of the days of the Regency, and of the later days when Queen Caroline was fighting for what she esteemed her rightful share in the lot of her royal husband, is ignorant of the name of Alderman Wood? It is the fashion now-a-days, as it has been the fashion ever since the City was the City, to sneer at your alderman as a dull fellow, capable of nothing more than gross feeding and vulgar pomposity. We do not propose to run a tilt, on behalf of the aldermanic order, against all the wits and cynics who have attacked it since the days of Chaucer. But we may at least aver, that there is hardly to be found in the page of history an instance of a purer, a more earnest, or a more chivalrous devotion to an unfortunate woman, than that which Alderman Matthew Wood tendered for many years to the consort of his sovereign. It may have been a mistaken devotion—we shall not rip up old memories that are best buried amongst the dead, in order to argue that point. But if it was a mistake, it was at

least one which did the highest credit to the character of the man who made it.

And there are other incidents in the life of the Alderman—who twice filled the office of Lord Mayor, and for thirty-seven years represented the City of London in the House of Commons—which are equally honourable to his memory. The personal courage which he displayed more than once in the case of outrages and riots in the City, and the moral courage which led him, at the time of the miserable Thistlewood conspiracy, to denounce the Government for its employment of the infamous spy Edwards, are points in the character of Alderman Sir Matthew Wood which ought, of themselves, to confer lustre upon the order of which he was a member.

The present Lord Chancellor was the second son of this model citizen of London. His father, who had acquired considerable wealth by his business, was fortunate enough to be made the heir of the notorious miser, James Wood, of Gloucester; and in that capacity received a sudden accession of fortune, amounting to at least a quarter of a million sterling. It thus happened that the early years of William Page Wood were passed in the midst of an affluence and worldly prosperity which, it must be confessed, have not been enjoyed by many of his predecessors on the woolsack. First at Winchester School and then at college, the future Lord Chancellor gained considerable distinction; though, it must be acknowledged, that he was not one of the few men who succeed in winning the highest honours of academic study.

In 1827, at the age of twenty-six, he was called to the bar at Lincoln's Inn; and there he commenced,

very modestly and unostentatiously, that legal career which was to make him at last custodian of the Great Seal and keeper of the Queen's conscience. He did not rise rapidly, like some of those who, entering the profession after him, long since passed him in the race; nor did he achieve any of those exceptional triumphs, which often do more for a man in a day than years of successful industry. But he slowly won his way. Something was of course due to the position of his father, and to his own wide and influential connection; but it may fairly be said, that still more was due to the sound ability as a lawyer which he early developed.

In 1845 he took the silk gown, having taken twenty-eight years in which to gain it; and two years later, he entered Parliament as member for the City of Oxford. He made his mark in the House of Commons much more rapidly than he had done at the bar. It was a somewhat singular mark which he made, however: he became known as one of the most advanced Radicals in the House. The radicalism of that day was mild, compared with the creed now professed by Mr. Peter Taylor or Mr. Henry Fawcett. Nevertheless, it will not be questioned that Mr. Page Wood's views were of a decided character, when we state that he was even then an ardent advocate of the ballot, and a supporter of the disestablishment of the Irish Church.

Two years after entering Parliament the eminent equity lawyer obtained his first political preferment, he being appointed to the Vice-Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster. In March 1851, after he had held this office for nearly two years, he received the

*much more important post of Solicitor-General; and received, at the same time, that title of knighthood by which he is so well and so affectionately remembered at Lincoln's Inn.

But in less than twelve months, an extraordinary—indeed, we may almost say, an unexampled—event took place. All who know anything of the political world know that the man who has once succeeded in gaining the Solicitor-Generalship has placed his foot upon the first round of a not very long ladder, the end of which is the woolsack. For in this matter official *étiquette* is of the strictest kind; and let a man once succeed in gaining knighthood and the Solicitor-Generalship, and he has thenceforth a claim, which is never denied, to still higher preferment.

But at the very time when Sir William Page Wood seemed to have fairly gained a place in the front ranks, and when the great prize for which all barristers are supposed to be contending was at least in view, he suddenly stepped aside from the race, and left it to others. And what was the reason? It was very simple, and yet it was a reason which, we venture to say, no successful lawyer ever gave before for such a course. Sir William found that the heavy labours imposed upon him as Solicitor-General 'so seriously interfered with the duties of domestic life and the comforts of his home,' that he 'felt bound to relinquish his honourable position.'

There will doubtless be great difference of opinion as to the propriety of the course which the great lawyer took, in resigning the Solicitor-Generalship for such a reason. Many men, who have either little idea of home ties and their strength, or who, having these

ties, undervalue them, will sneer at the man who could calmly step aside from a place which he had won by years of unremitting labour—a place of honour, of responsibility, of influence—in order to have more leisure to spend by his own fireside, in the society of his wife and of those who were dear to him.

For our part, however, we see in this little incident a charming touch of nature, which ought to exalt Lord Hatherley in the opinion of all who know what it is to have a happy home. After all, a man's first duty in this world is towards those of his own household. It is universally admitted that those who would enjoy domestic happiness must be prepared to sacrifice many things to each other; and when we see the head of a household ready to sacrifice that which is so dear to most of us—ambition and worldly advancement—for the sake of those who share his life, we must at least admit that there is a singular moral beauty in the action. To few men is it given to have the strength to perform this act of self-sacrifice; and to not a few men, therefore, there comes a time when, with bitter tears and unavailing regrets, they look back upon a life which may, perchance, have seemed very successful in the eyes of the world, but the success of which, they themselves must acknowledge, has been bought at the price, not of their own domestic comfort merely, but of the comfort of those by whom they are surrounded in their homes. Sir William Page Wood, therefore, when he resigned the post of Solicitor-General, because the comfort of his household was marred by the extent of the duties entailed upon him, set an example which was as valuable as it was rare.

Not long after this a post was found for Sir William which seemed to be in every way eminently suited to him. He became one of the Vice-Chancellors. For fifteen years he continued to hold the office to which he was thus called, and in course of time obtained a reputation in the discharge of his judicial duties of the most enviable description.

No one who has ever penetrated into the dingy little court in the purlieus of Lincoln's Inn, where Vice-Chancellor Wood presided, will readily forget the admirable manner in which the learned judge discharged his functions. His unfailing urbanity towards all parties, the quickness and accuracy with which he perceived the main issues of the various cases brought before him, and the impartiality and soundness of his decisions, united to make him the favourite alike of counsel, attorneys, and suitors.

He had only one fault. He thought too quickly. In delivering his judgments his ideas followed each other so rapidly through his brain, that he had not time to express them fully. The toiling shorthand writers vainly endeavouring to fix upon paper the stream of broken words which he poured forth, often found that when they had succeeded in doing this they had only got a string of unfinished sentences. Once, if we mistake not, another learned judge to whom some appeal from Vice-Chancellor Wood's Court was carried, expressed himself in very strong terms as to the impropriety of a judge delivering important decisions in so slipshod a fashion, and urged that those decisions ought always to be written before being communicated to the public. To this practice, however, Sir William was always opposed ; and what-

ever might be the fault of his manner in giving his judgments, it was at least certain that his judgments themselves were amongst the soundest and most unimpeachable of any given by any of our judges.

In February, 1868—not certainly before it was due to him—Sir William Page Wood found himself advanced to the much higher and more dignified post of Lord Justice of Appeal. It was Mr. Disraeli who bestowed this preferment upon him, and in connection with it a graceful incident which is worthy of being recorded ought to be mentioned. A short time previously, Sir Jasper Selwin, the Conservative Solicitor-General, had been made a Justice of Appeal, and when Lord Cairns was raised from the same court to the Lord Chancellorship, and the vacancy created which was subsequently filled up by Sir William Page Wood, Sir Jasper became, as a matter of right, senior Lord Justice. But when Vice-Chancellor Wood was promoted, Lord Justice Selwin insisted upon giving to him the first place in the court, and accordingly Sir William Page Wood became at once senior Lord Justice.

A few months later, however, came that last and highest preferment which Lord Hatherley now enjoys. In December, 1868, when Mr. Gladstone was suddenly called upon to form a ministry, there was no post in the Cabinet as to the filling of which more doubt existed in the public mind than the Lord Chancellorship. One man there was, indeed, whose claim to the woolsack is pre-eminent, and who had but to speak in order to command it. Sir Roundell Palmer, by his services to his party, by his splendid legal attainments, by his high position in Parliament, and by

the intellectual powers he had displayed in dealing with many of the great questions of the day, was marked out as the fittest man to take the charge of the great seal and of the Queen's conscience. But all the world knows how it was that this great equity lawyer allowed the splendid prize within his grasp to pass by him.

Mr. Gladstone was about to deal with the question of the Irish Church, and Sir Roundell Palmer—one of the most devout and earnest men who ever occupied a seat in Parliament—could not act with his chief upon that question. Rather than do the least wrong to his conscience, rather than take the least part in that which he believed to be an attack upon the religious principles which were most dear to him, he abandoned his claim to the Lord Chancellorship, and retired for the time being from the more active pursuit of politics. It was at this crisis, when Mr. Gladstone was seriously perplexed as to the course which he should take in disposing of the great prize which he had to bestow, that some one—if we mistake not, it was Sir Roundell Palmer himself—bethought him of the man who nearly a score of years before had retired from the Solicitor-Generalship in order that he might the better perform his domestic duties, and who ever since had been lost to politics.

It was a happy thought. Sir W. Page Wood had an established reputation as a lawyer, was universally esteemed as a man, and in supporting the disestablishment of the Irish Church could not at any rate be charged with inconsistency. Nevertheless, when he was raised to the woolsack, and to a seat in the House of Lords, great diversity of opinion existed as to the

wisdom of Mr. Gladstone's choice. It was believed that with all his other good qualities the new Lord Chancellor would lack that power in debate which is so essential to the active member of a Government. Invidious comparisons were drawn between Lord Hatherley and Sir Roundell Palmer, and it was even asked why the Premier had not rather chosen such a man as Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, or Mr., now Sir John, Coleridge, in place of one who, it was believed, was only intended as a stop-gap until the time came when the post might be offered to the ex-Attorney-General, whose scruples would not admit of his then accepting it.

It is not too much to say that Mr. Gladstone's wisdom in choosing Lord Hatherley has been more than vindicated by the course of events. The present Lord Chancellor, it was always known, would be a thoroughly able and competent head of the legal profession; but he has shown himself more than this, for during the many great debates he has taken his place as one of the leading speakers in the House of Lords, and rendered to his party services which could hardly have been done for it by anyone else.

It is true that Lord Hatherley is not a polished speaker. His voice is rough and inharmonious; his thoughts are flung out by his mind rough-hewn, without any attempt at style or finish, and too often the rapidity with which those thoughts are expressed weakens the force with which they are sent home to those who hear them. But despite these defects—and they are no slight ones—no one can listen to Lord Hatherley without receiving the impression of great mental power, allied to high moral excellence.

Many persons will doubtless smile at the idea that a Lord Chancellor can, in delivering a judgment upon some knotty legal point, impress those who hear him with a sense of his own high-toned morality. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that even in the dullest and dryest of Lord Hatherley's judgments the acute critic may see running like a silver thread through the knotted fabric of legal proofs and references, a keen sensitiveness to the highest standard of morality, a nice perception of the finest questions in which honour is involved, which convey a happy impression of the personal character of the speaker himself.

When it is Lord Hatherley's lot to deal with any of the great politico-ecclesiastical questions which now-a-days agitate Parliament so frequently, however much we may differ from the views which he takes upon those questions, we are bound to admit that no suspicion of his personal sincerity, or of the thorough earnestness with which he advocates his opinions, can enter the mind. Indeed the *Times*, commenting upon one of his speeches a few sessions back, alluded to the fact that it was not so much the speech of a great lawyer as of a Christian gentleman.

And the private life of the Lord Chancellor shows that, more than most men, he is entitled to speak in that capacity. With the religious views, and the private virtues or failings of our statesmen, we have scrupulously refrained from intermeddling in these sketches. Nevertheless, Lord Hatherley—as in that notable case of his resignation of the Solicitor-Generalship—has so interwoven his public and his private life that we feel that we are justified in referring to the latter as well as to the former. We shall

not insult Lord Hatherley by using the language of adulation with respect to it. But we may say that the example which the great lawyer, who, during the last three years, has proved his right to be considered a great statesman also, sets before us in his private capacity is, unhappily, not a common example.

For many years, both when he was in Parliament and when he was sitting as one of the Vice-Chancellors at Lincoln's Inn, Sir William Page Wood laboured every Sunday when he was in town as a Sunday-school teacher, in connection with the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster. Every morning, in winter and in summer, in fair weather and in foul, you may see, if you choose to attend the early service in Westminster Abbey—a service which is at an end before half the people in London have left their bedrooms—the erect and powerful figure of the whiteheaded old man, who is just now the keeper of the Queen's conscience. Living close at hand, in Great George Street, one of the duties which the Lord Chancellor has, for a score of years, been most particular in performing, is that of daily attendance at morning prayer in the Abbey.

In many other ways, too, he has given proofs of his devotion to the Church of which he is now so important a member. If he has not distinguished himself in legal literature, he has, at least, won a high place amongst theologians by his work on 'The Continuity of Scripture,' a work which proves, not only his learning, but his devoutness, and his unquestioning faith in Divine revelation. It is a singular and noticeable circumstance that the other great lawyer of the Liberal party, and the man who, but for the circum-

stance we have already alluded to, would have occupied the woolsack in the place of Lord Hatherley—we mean, of course, Sir Roundell Palmer—is also distinguished for his attachment to the Church of England, and for the part he has taken in our religious literature.

For Sir Roundell Palmer Lord Hatherley, it is certain, entertains feelings of the highest admiration. When he first became Lord Chancellor, with characteristic modesty and kindliness, he spoke of himself as little more than the temporary substitute for one far worthier than himself of the high honours he had achieved ; and it is an equally characteristic circumstance that he should, frequently since his elevation, have spoken of that elevation as one which had never been looked for by himself. Nobody, indeed, we have reason to know, was more astonished than Sir William Page Wood when Mr. Gladstone sent for him to offer him the Great Seal. All the more creditable to him is it that one who has so humble an opinion of his own abilities should have been able to show the world that those abilities are really of a high, if not of the highest, order.

It is not likely that Lord Hatherley will long retain his seat on the woolsack. Though wonderfully vigorous for his age, yet, when we consider that he is now past his seventieth year, we cannot think that he will long feel himself equal to the arduous double duties which the Lord Chancellor has to perform. For, during the session, no official is harder worked than the Keeper of the Great Seal. In the House of Lords he has to act as President, and has constantly to take a leading part in the debates as the representative of

the Government ; in the Cabinet he is necessarily being frequently consulted, not only upon ministerial, but upon legal questions ; whilst the professional duties which devolve upon him, both at Lincoln's Inn and the House of Lords, are of themselves sufficient to tax the strength and the abilities of most men.

But whether his tenure of the Lord Chancellorship be long or short, friends and opponents alike will admit that Lord Hatherley is one of the men who have conferred additional lustre upon the highest legal honour.





MR. HENLEY.

MR. HENLEY is one of those men whose lives and characters give a certain flavour of freshness and originality to whatever company it may be their fortune to be associated with. You meet with many attempts to portray such men in fiction, but you do not meet with them so frequently in real life : though when you do meet them there you never forget them.

They are, for the most part, rough, angular figures, apt, if you come in contact with them, to chafe you somewhat painfully with one of their sharp corners ; very apt, too, to put heavy feet upon that tender moral corn which you cherish so lovingly. They are quaint, dogmatic, not exactly conceited, but certainly self-opinionated ; they ride rough-shod over the pet fancies and prejudices of other people, and, with their strong common sense, they sweep away whole cobwebs of philosophic theories. Those who don't know them personally are inclined to look upon them as being somewhat ill-bred, and somewhat disagreeable to boot ; but those who do know them have a real admiration for the sturdy independence, the vigorous common sense, and the genuine kindness of heart which are, after all, their chief characteristics. The

rest of those characteristics they regard in the light of eccentricities which only serve to bring out their real excellence more prominently.

It is a piece of good fortune for the House of Commons that it should have in its midst to-day such a man as Mr. Henley : for men of the type to which he belongs do not, as a rule, meddle much in public business. You find them most frequently leading the pleasant life of the country squire—the terror of poachers, the friend of the honest labourer, and the centre and oracle of an admiring circle of friends. Their quaint sayings, their shrewd predictions, their rough acts of kindness, the summary justice with which they visit those who offend them, are all celebrated throughout the district in which they live, and ‘the squire’ takes first rank amongst his neighbours, even when he is surrounded by landowners of greater wealth or higher social position.

But, as a rule, you do not find these men taking an active part in public life. Perhaps it is that they are too fond of being the oracles and leaders of their own special circle of friends to care to take part in the struggles of a larger arena ; or, possibly, it may be that their attachment to the established order of things is too deep to permit of their witnessing changes which they are powerless to avert, without a keen sense of pain.

In Mr. Henley, however, there is an exception to this rule ; and the exception, if it proves nothing else, must, at any rate, convince those who are acquainted with it that, if the class of men of which the member for Oxfordshire is a type, would consent to take a more active part in the great business of the world, a

large amount of public good would be the result. The right honourable gentleman is 'the Squire' of the House of Commons; and all that he says in Parliament is listened to as attentively and respectfully as though he were talking at Quarter Sessions in his own county. He is the recognised representative of that particular class of country gentlemen who have done so much to make England what it is, and who, if they are sometimes dogmatic and prejudiced, are, nevertheless, distinguished, perhaps more largely than any other class in society, for their patriotism and their independence.

Somewhat bent in figure now, and visibly growing older every year, with thin grey hair shading his keen, resolute face, and eyes that are still bright peering out under shaggy brows, Mr. Henley is personally a noticeable figure in the House of Commons. He cannot be mistaken for anything else than what he is—a country gentleman, as much accustomed to the homage of his neighbours and the reverence of the village children as his Sovereign is to the etiquette of her Court. And certainly 'Sir Roger' himself could not bear his homely honours with more ease and dignity than Mr. Henley.

One would like, by way of experiment, to witness a meeting between 'Squire' Henley, in his somewhat threadbare and rusty garments, and one of those bran-new country gentlemen that Lancashire turns out by the dozen every year, and whose velvet coat and corduroy breeches are the delight of the tailor and the admiration of the ignorant. If such meetings as this, however, must be left to the imagination, we can, at least, recall many encounters between the

member for Oxfordshire and the representatives of those 'forces' to which he is most resolutely and earnestly opposed.

On many an occasion, the House, after listening to the fervid eloquence of some eager orator, of whose sincerity there might, at least, be some suspicion, has turned with delight to Mr. Henley, and has seen the pitiless manner in which, in the course of half-a-dozen shrewd sentences, he has demolished the arguments of the 'friend of the people,' whose challenge he had accepted. And in the great debates which, from time to time, stir Parliament, there is hardly a man who is listened to with more attention or delight than the old country gentleman who never seems to make a set speech, but who, in the course of a few apparently unpremeditated remarks, will often make more points than those which the most accomplished orators in the House are able to compress within their most ambitious harangues.

It is no doubt chiefly owing to the supreme common sense, and the wonderful shrewdness which Mr. Henley always displays in his views of the questions with which he deals, that the consideration he receives from the House is to be attributed. The right honourable gentleman is nothing if he is not practical. Whilst the leaders of the two parties are floundering through the shifting quicksands of theory, or are shaping their arguments to suit the demands of political expediency, Mr. Henley never seems to see any part of a question but the matter-of-fact one. 'What will be the actual result of this change?' is a question he invariably asks and answers when any important proposal is made to the House. 'Is

it needed? Can it be effected? How will it work?' Those are the points to which Mr. Henley addresses himself, and upon which his views have an amount of weight and authority that it would be difficult to exaggerate. His vast and lengthened experience as a magistrate, as a landowner, as a Member of the House of Commons, all enable him to speak with a certainty in discussing these points, which cannot be attained by many of his colleagues.

But his common sense is not of that ponderous description which seems to act as a wet blanket upon all that comes within its reach. It is lightened by a homely wit which ought to secure for Mr. Henley a high place amongst the humourists of the political world, and it often finds expression in phrases which have the epigrammatic force and brevity of proverbs. Many of those phrases, indeed, which have become the proverbs of the House of Commons, were first uttered by the member for Oxfordshire; none of these, perhaps, being more famous than that in which he described the advance of democracy as 'an ugly rush.'

Sometimes indeed, Mr. Henley's humour is of that description in which Squire Western most delighted. It has the wholesome flavour of the stable-yard about it, and the very refined may reject it as not 'nice' enough for the drawing-room. Perhaps it is not; but our modern experience teaches us, that what is considered very 'nice' indeed, and quite fit for the salon and the club, may at the same time be very nasty also.

A few years ago, we remember the right honourable gentleman bringing out one of his Squire Western jokes, and convulsing the House with laughter. It

was when, referring to Mr. Gladstone and his schemes for the disestablishment of the Irish Church, he compared him to a lady in an interesting condition. The homely language in which he spoke, and the quaint air of innocence which he wore, were irresistible; and it is long since the House enjoyed a heartier laugh than that in which it then indulged. Perhaps it enjoyed the jest all the more because of its conviction that no one but Mr. Henley could have uttered it. He stands alone in the House, indeed, as the representative of the racy and old-fashioned humour which has never been properly represented in English literature since the days of Fielding. He is almost the last of a great race, and it is difficult to say where we shall look for anyone to succeed him.

Mr. Henley has twice, for not very lengthened periods, filled the office of President of the Board of Trade, under Conservative Governments. On the last occasion he resigned office in February, 1859, in consequence of the strong objections he entertained to the Conservative Reform Bill, which was at that time brought in. It is not, however, as the Minister of the Crown, but rather, as the Mentor of the House of Commons, that the right honourable gentleman is most distinguished. Shrewd, original, witty, brimful of common sense, and blessed with a wonderfully equable temperament, Mr. Henley is precisely one of those men whom Parliament cannot afford to lose.



THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

'INTENSELY Scotch,' is what most men say when they see his Grace the Duke of Argyll. And it is quite true that his appearance *is* intensely Scotch. The chief of the Campbells has the slight, but erect and firmly-knit figure of a Highlander; his head is covered with the yellow hair which has so long been one of the distinguishing marks of his race, and his face has that peculiar complexion which is so seldom met with except in the inhabitants of North Britain.

Thus in his appearance his nationality is unmistakable, and no one seeing him can doubt for a moment that he comes from the lands beyond Solway Frith. To finish this sketch of his outward man at once, it may be remarked that there is something singularly fine in the Duke's head and face. He has a noble forehead, and the intellectual evidently predominates over the animal, in his nature—if one may form a judgment upon that important point from the peculiar moulding of his features. And yet there is nothing about head or face to qualify the verdict which a stranger would pronounce upon him at first sight—the verdict that he is 'intensely Scotch.'

And certainly no one who heard him speak would be inclined to reverse that verdict. Years of residence

in London, and of constant intercourse with Englishmen, have failed to rob his tongue of the rough Doric of his native land. He is a voluble speaker—one of the fastest in the House of Lords—yet as you listen to him pouring out polished but vigorous sentences, you are never permitted to forget that he is a Scotchman. He is a keen politician, a man of culture, and of statesman-like instinct; but more than anything else, he is a Scotchman.

And, perhaps, for the purposes of this sketch we can best treat him as the representative of Scotland in the House of Lords. There are of course many other Scotch noblemen; but most assuredly there is none—not even ‘the bold Buccleuch’ himself—who is so thoroughly Scotch as the Duke of Argyll. No one can say, however, that he has any reason to seek to hide his nationality, or to feel ashamed of his country. Scotland has given us again and again some of our foremost men, and at the present moment, when the Lord Chancellor, the Prime Minister, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Secretary of State for India are all of Scotch descent, the northern kingdom has at least its full share of influence in the national counsels.

But there are Scotchmen and Scotchmen. No one can say that either Mr. Gladstone or Archbishop Tait, for instance, is thoroughly Scotch. The English birth of the former, and the long residence in the south of the latter, have deprived them of the peculiarities of the Scotch character. They have had their angles ‘rubbed down’ in the social mill, and are all the more cosmopolitan in taste and disposition that they are the inhabitants of one country whilst deriving

their descent from another. This, as every inhabitant of London—which enjoys, it is said, the presence of six hundred thousand Scotchmen—knows, is by no means an uncommon case with the North Briton.

There are Scotchmen, on the other hand, who, rugged and hard as a piece of flint, may live for years away from their native land, may mingle constantly with the best society of other countries, and yet retain to their last hour every minute peculiarity which distinguishes their countrymen. London has not a few eminent examples of this second type of the North Briton ; only two, however, need be named—Thomas Carlyle and the Duke of Argyll. It is with the latter that we are now concerned.

It has been the great misfortune of the Duke to have been deprived of the advantages of a University education. If, like most other young men of his station, he had been trained at Oxford or Cambridge, he might have lost not a little of the ruggedness of his character. As it is, he was brought up under private tuition, and he may be said to have entered upon public life without having been called upon to measure his strength on equal terms with men around him.

It is a terrible misfortune to any man to be born into the world as the eldest son of a duke ; to have not the silver, but the golden spoon constantly in his mouth, and to be surrounded from his birth by those who are never permitted for a single hour to forget that ‘my Lord’ the Marquis will soon be ‘his Grace’ the Duke, chief of a great family, and owner, it may be, of vast possessions. Something, however, is done

to mitigate this misfortune, when the youth so placed is sent to a public school—where, surely, if nowhere else, he may learn that ‘the rank is but the guinea stamp’—and to College, where, if he like, he may meet with friends, who, though they may care a good deal for the man, will not care a straw for the Duke. These advantages, however, were denied to the Duke of Argyll. The natural consequence was that he was trained, not as a young man, but as a young Marquis. From his earliest years he had a lively consciousness of his own importance in the social scale, and throughout his life he has never forgotten his great birth and splendid rank. Characteristically enough, when he was still a beardless boy, he indited his ‘Letter to the Peers, by a Peer’s Son,’ a singularly vapid and uninteresting performance, bristling in every line with its writer’s intense self-consciousness.

This pride of birth, moreover, does not stand alone in the Duke’s character. It is accompanied by the yet more aggressive pride of intellect. The Duke is a very able man. If he had been but a poor Commoner he would in all probability have risen to a really important place in political life. As it is, his wits have never been sharpened by that wholesome struggle through which all self-made men must pass. Possibly it is for this very reason that he entertains so high an opinion of his own ability.

He has unquestionably a great admiration of genius, wherever he meets it, and one of the best traits in his personal character is the manner in which he has befriended struggling talent. But if he had himself been compelled to pass through the hard struggle from obscurity to fame, he would know that, able

as he is, he has no personal pretensions to the character of a genius.

As it is, his strength has never been really tested, and he therefore not unnaturally believes it to be somewhat greater than it is. He has done a good many very clever things, has hitherto found himself quite equal for the kind of work which Prime Ministers are in the habit of entrusting to dukes, and has even earned an enviable literary reputation. Can we, therefore, feel very much surprised that he should think himself much more clever than he is, or that he should seek to impress this opinion of his powers upon the world at large?

Apart from this pride, however, it would be hard to say much in depreciation of the Duke of Argyll. We know that he has been sneered at as 'a Scotch pedagogue,' and that men have once and again denounced the pedantry of his character. But we confess we think such critics are singularly wide of the mark. That he has a certain provincialism of feeling, arising from the defects of his early training, is no doubt true. This provincialism displays itself in numberless ways, and it is no doubt very irritating to people, who are not distinguished by it—or by anything else.

The Duke's pride would doubtless be of a different character were it not for this provincialism. As it is, it is not the pride of a Somerset or a Grey; it is rather the pride of a Scotch laird, who knows that he is the greatest man in his own district; or of a Scotch minister, who feels a not unreasonable respect for his own abilities, when he compares them with those of his unlettered flock. It is, in short, a narrow,

even a petty pride ; not the noble, though fatal passion which caused the fall of Lucifer. But this is his worst defect, and apart from it he has many qualities which demand our respect and our admiration.

He has for instance shown throughout his life an unvarying sympathy with his own countrymen. We are told, on what is we imagine good authority, that he is not popular in Scotland. If this is indeed the case, then we can only say that his unpopularity is by no means deserved. Deeply impressed with the traditions of his race, the Duke remembers how his forefathers were once the representatives of their countrymen at the court of their sovereign, and how the prayers of the poor North Britons for mercy or redress were laid at the foot of the throne by the McCullum Mohr. He is apparently anxious to maintain those traditions as far as he can do so. Scotland, it is true, no longer needs a duke as her spokesman ; she has her full amount of influence in the House of Commons.

But Scotchmen are still, as of yore, a race anxious to advance in the world—to rise above their rivals as oil rises above water. Thus it happens that the poor but ambitious Scot comes up to London by the hundred every year, bent upon making a name and a fortune for himself. Of course it would be utterly impossible for any one man to undertake the charge of this North British contingent, and for the most part the Scotchman in London is very well able to help himself without the need of ducal patronage. But again and again the Duke of Argyll has shown his sympathy with his struggling fellow-countrymen. The northern dialect which he himself speaks, the

northern complexion which is to be seen in his own face, and the northern character of which he furnishes a type, are all dearer to him than anything to be seen in the South.

One can imagine that he is passionately fond of the rugged scenery of his native land ; and it is at least beyond a question that he is passionately fond of the rugged character of his fellow-countrymen. He shows this affection for the traits which distinguish Scotchmen in many different ways. In a recent debate on the Scotch Schools' Bill in the House of Lords, he spoke with the warmest feeling of sympathy for that representative man, the 'dominie' of his native land. He evidently knew the hard life which too many schoolmasters had to lead ; and was as deeply impressed with the difficulties and trials which they had to surmount as though he had been one of their number. It is too rare a thing to find this close sympathy existing between the highest rank of the peerage and the lowest rank of professional life. Who, for instance, would expect Lord Granville, or the Earl of Derby, to display not only compassion for the English parish schoolmaster, but a perfect knowledge of all his wants, and a deep personal sympathy with him in all his difficulties ?

The Duke is, moreover, distinguished by an unswerving consistency in his political creed. He is a Liberal of Liberals ; and whilst he has nothing of the demagogue in him, he has not a few of the qualities which fit a man to be a great public leader. There is that sympathy with the struggles of the poor of which we have just spoken, and there is besides that fervid enthusiasm which has animated

so many Scotch patriots. Nobody who has studied his character can doubt that he has in him the fiery resolution, and enduring courage, of which martyrs are made. Were it necessary the Duke would go to the scaffold for his opinions as cheerfully as his great ancestor; and despite the eager nervous temperament which distinguishes him, he would, we verily believe, sleep as cheerfully as that ancestor did upon the eve of his execution.

This is high praise, but it is not undeserved. Unfortunately, however, it must be materially qualified. Like his ancestors, the Duke's enthusiasm, though intense, is narrow. His early training hedged him round with prejudices, and though he has all his life long been struggling to break away from those prejudices, he has not always succeeded in doing so. He is still intolerant of the opinions of those who differ from him; still has that hard pragmatical character which so frequently belongs to the provincial Scotchman.

Not even his long political career and his constant intercourse with the foremost men of his day have robbed him of this trait. It is occasionally intensely irritating to hear him dealing with a great question in the House of Lords, just as it is intensely irritating to be compelled to listen to some local politician, a great man in his own vestry, serenely laying down as indisputable, his judgment upon matters which have puzzled the greatest and wisest of mankind. This it is which accounts for much of the Duke's unpopularity in political circles. For that he is unpopular it is impossible to deny. Nor is it surprising that even a duke should fail to conciliate the world,

when he is not only personally proud and haughty, but when he shows at times that narrowness of opinion of which we have spoken.

Let us do the Duke justice, however. He evidently knows his own defects in this respect, and endeavours, to the best of his ability, to supply them. He has, as we said at first, the instinct of the statesman. He is very clever. He has a warm sympathy with his political party; and is a tolerably docile minister. All these things tend to counteract his hard narrowness of view. When to these are added an intense desire on his part to advance in political life, and a strong imitative faculty, enabling him to mould himself with considerable success upon the 'lines' of some more powerful statesman, it is quite evident that he may, in the end, be able to counteract the influence of his early training, and to make for himself a really great position in the world of politics. Whether he will ever be an original statesman, is a point upon which many persons will entertain a doubt. Despite his cleverness, his experience, and his devotion to business, he could hardly lead one of the great political parties. But, given a leader whom he can follow, and he will turn out a most useful and able lieutenant. He might never strike out a great line of political action for his party, might never bring to bear upon the question of the day that breadth of view and grasp of intellect which are necessary on the part of a real leader; but let his path be clearly defined, let his chief set the limits within which he is to act, and he will do his work with unquestionable power and efficiency. To use a very homely illustration, he will make an excellent journeyman statesman; master of state-craft he could never be.

It is necessary, however, that there should be journeymen as well as masters in all trades—and the rule holds good in the trade of high politics as well as in others. If we get in the Duke of Argyll a fair statesman of the second class—a capable man who can hold his own in a debate, who can make ministerial statements with clearness and brevity, and who can preside over a department with something more than ordinary ducal efficiency—we get a very useful article, and one which is by no means to be despised. Even in a Cabinet there must be degrees of ability. Only two or three men in any ministry reach the first rank in statesmanship, and it is no small honour to any man to hold a fair place amongst statesmen of the second rank.

That the Duke's place in this class is a fair one cannot be denied. As a debater, indeed, he rises very near to the first class. His speeches are almost always powerful, and they have at the same time a degree of finish which is rare amongst politicians. On the front bench of his party in the House of Lords he is, upon the whole, the most efficient debater. He has not, of course, anything of Lord Granville's wonderful tact; on the contrary, indeed, he generally succeeds in irritating where he intends to conciliate; but, intellectually, he has more power than the leader of his party in the Upper House; and, as he has a sufficient amount of courage, and a ready command of words, he can hold his own very well against the best speakers of the opposition.

He is ambitious, of course; and seems especially to aspire to fame as an orator—one of the consequences of which weakness is that he thinks it neces-

sary to inflict upon the House, at the close of his more important speeches, perorations carefully modelled upon those of Mr. Bright. If he could but convince himself that he is not a second Bright, he would do not a little to increase his reputation, and diminish his unpopularity. As it is, however, it must be admitted that, when he has a business statement to make, he always makes it with clearness and succinctness—virtues which are, unfortunately, too rare.

It can honestly be said that the Duke has, upon the whole, distinguished himself as an administrator. The time that he has been at the India Office may not have been long enough to test him thoroughly ; but it is undeniable that, hitherto, he has conducted the business of the department with marked success. He has been very quick to see the merits of the statesmanlike schemes of his predecessors, and he at least deserves the credit of having allowed neither political prejudice nor his own pride to stand in the way of carrying out the plans they left behind them. His present office is unquestionably a fitting one for a great Scotch nobleman, for India has for a century been governed by Scotchmen, and thousands of his fellow-countrymen are to be found amongst those who, with more or less success, have shaken the pagoda tree.

The Duke has made a marked advance in his administrative powers since office was first entrusted to him ; and the fact that he is now the ruler, and the able and efficient ruler, of the Indian Empire, is at least proof that he is not meanly esteemed by his chief and his colleagues.



SIR STAFFORD NORTHCOTE.

FEW men on the Conservative benches have greater claims to the public esteem than Sir Stafford Northcote. It has not been his lot to reach the highest rank of statesmen, or to 'sway the listening senate' by his eloquence, but it has been his fortune to do useful work for his country, and to do it well, throughout his whole public career. No one expects that he will ever lead his party, or be called to the Premiership, but few persons can doubt that he will always hold one of the first places in the esteem of the Conservatives, and the respect of the country at large.

Sir Stafford Northcote, like the Duke of Argyll and the Marquis of Salisbury, has held the great post of Secretary for India. It would be idle to pretend that he gained, in a few months, that remarkable mastery over the duties and responsibilities of his post, which the ceaseless application and great powers of the Marquis of Salisbury enabled him to obtain. But his tenure of the India Office will at least compare creditably with that of any of his predecessors. He committed no glaring blunders; he made none of those false steps which may be so easily taken in that department, and which too often lead to irreparable mischief. He was, in short, a good Indian secretary,

popular in his own office, and popular in India ; and we have even been told that the news of the change of ministry, which involved his retirement from the department over which he was presiding with so much success, cast a gloom over the public offices of our Eastern empire.

It was during his term of office that the Abyssinian Expedition was resolved upon, and carried out ; and to Sir Stafford Northcote, more than to any other man, save Lord Napier, are we indebted for the circumstance that this noble though costly enterprise, instead of ending in a repetition of the Crimean muddle, resulted in a brilliant and almost bloodless victory.

We know that it has since been the fashion to decry the Abyssinian campaign, and to cast heavy censures upon those involved in it. Gentlemen upon the benches below the gangway, panting for notoriety, and covetous of a more lucrative if less independent position than that which they were then occupying, made the discovery that the Expedition had cost a great deal more than it ought to have done—that in the sudden demand for enormous quantities of coals, stores, arms, and ammunition, prices were paid which far exceeded the proper value of those articles ; and they went so far as to demand a Parliamentary enquiry into the subject.

The enquiry duly took place, and showed, as might have been expected, that some blunders had been committed, and that more than one underling had failed in the duty entrusted to him. But common justice compels us to say that Sir Stafford Northcote emerged from it with a spotless character. He had

himself been prompt to second Mr. Candlish's motion for the Abyssinian Committee, and he was fully exonerated, as the result of the enquiries of that Committee, from the blame which had been too freely bestowed upon him. As a mere matter of fact, it must be owned that Sir Stafford Northcote, although he has no pretensions to the highest class of statesmanship, showed himself upon that occasion to be an administrator of far more than average ability. To him fell one of the largest parts in connection with the Expedition.

Whilst it was in preparation, he devoted himself for several months exclusively to it and to his other official duties, labouring day and night to perform the Herculean task imposed upon him. Thanks to his energy and discretion, Sir Robert Napier found everything at Massowah which he required, and was enabled to carry his army up to Magdala almost without the loss of a single life, and to bring it back again after the brief struggle with Theodore, absolutely better in health and general condition than when it started. It was very easy for gentlemen afterwards to discover that a needless quantity of stores was sent to Abyssinia, and that money was expended in procuring from other lands animals or provisions which might have been obtained at a much smaller cost in the country itself. Let it be remembered, when charges of this kind are made against those who had the conduct of this campaign, that when it was undertaken our knowledge of Abyssinia itself was of the slightest possible description; and that our ideas with respect to the difficulties and dangers which awaited our troops were, in consequence, naturally exaggerated.

Let it also be borne in mind that defeat from any cause in that mysterious country would have been an almost irreparable blow to the reputation of England abroad, that the news of our disasters would not only have been received with a chuckle of satisfaction in New York, in Paris, in Berlin, and in St. Petersburg, but that it would have occasioned secret rejoicings throughout our Indian Empire. The importance of the matter at issue in the campaign could not be exaggerated. Happily the undertaking was a complete, an unexampled success—thanks, chiefly, if not entirely, to Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Napier.

When we read this chapter in our military history, we sigh at the remembrance of the days when Red Tape was the sacred object of official worship, and when our gallant men in the Crimea were sacrificed to it by thousands. No minister of state—not even Mr. Lowe himself—could show a more complete freedom from the trammels of mere routine than did Sir Stafford Northcote upon this occasion; and his conduct in the emergency which then arose undoubtedly marks him out as an administrator of the highest ability—one of those men, too rarely to be found, to whom the country can trust in the midst of a great crisis.

It is because this Abyssinian campaign has really been the greatest achievement of Sir Stafford's political career that we give it this prominence in our sketch. We believe that his success on this occasion has been the turning-point of his life. We do not mean that it has won for him high honours or great influence, but that it has made him conscious of his own powers and of the manner in which those powers

can best be used. Before he was called upon to take his part in this emergency, he occasionally displayed a timidity in the exercise of his influence that did not a little to mar his usefulness. Now, however, he has acquired confidence in himself, and in his ability to meet any call which may be made upon him, and the result is that he will in the future take a much more prominent part in public affairs than was previously the case.

In the first instance, Sir Stafford Northcote won his spurs in Parliament as an authority upon matters of finance. Common rumour for several years designated him for the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, whenever Mr. Disraeli was called upon to assume the Premiership. When that event did happen, the right hon. baronet was far too deeply engaged in the conduct of the Abyssinian War to be able to desert the Indian Office for the Treasury; but there is some reason to think that he will occupy the post of Finance Minister in the next Conservative Administration.

He has undoubtedly shown himself an acute and able critic of the financial policy of the Liberal Government, and his views upon the question of national finance have been proved to be both sound and judicious. He can never hope to attain Mr. Gladstone's wonderful command of figures, nor could he aspire to Mr. Lowe's adroitness of manipulation; but should he ever be called upon to take charge of the National Exchequer, he may be relied upon as a safe and able Minister; one who will neither dazzle the country by perilous feats of daring, nor bewilder it by ingenious changes in the incidence of taxation, the only merit of which is their ingenuity. On the contrary, if Sir

Stafford Northcote, rather than Mr. Ward Hunt, is to be our future Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer, we shall expect to have in him a Minister whose wise measures will not only lighten the burden of taxation upon the people at large, but will foster and encourage the commerce of the country. So long as he continues a member of the Conservative party, that party never need want an efficient and reliable Minister of Finance.

But whilst Sir Stafford devoted himself for many years to the study of financial subjects, and showed great acuteness as well as a special knowledge in his mode of dealing with them, it must not be supposed that he neglected matters of more general interest. He has taken a considerable interest in education, and whilst his own views on that subject are, no doubt, of a somewhat prescribed and narrow character, he has shown that he can rise above any party politics, in dealing with a question of national importance. There are those who say he is not a 'deep' man, and it seems to us that the charge is to a certain extent well founded ; but if he does not give evidence in his speeches of any very profound thought, or close and long-continued study, he constantly gives evidence that he is not a mere politician, but that he is a man of high culture and enlightened sympathies.

Too many of our political leaders seem to be so wrapped up in politics that they have no eyes nor ears for anything else. This cannot be alleged against Sir Stafford Northcote. Again and again has he shown that his sympathies extend beyond the range of party, and that politics, though they may occupy the first, do not occupy the only place in his mind. His efforts

in the cause of education in Devonshire are well known in that county, whilst the social progress of the people, and of the poor especially, has always been a matter in which he has shown a deep interest. In this respect he may indeed be said to occupy a middle position between the country squire and the statesman. He possesses that strong sympathy with those around him, that feeling of personal friendship for the classes immediately dependent upon him, which distinguish the English country gentleman; but allied to these he has the higher instinct and the clearer judgment of the statesman. Few men are better fitted than he to attract at once the popularity of the masses and the confidence of the upper classes.

A striking evidence of his popularity with his opponents was given last year, when he was chosen by Mr. Gladstone to accompany Lord de Grey to Washington to arrange the Alabama Treaty. No choice could have been received with greater favour on both sides of the House, and whilst it did honour to Mr. Gladstone's impartiality and judgment, it was an unmistakeable proof of the esteem which it is Sir Stafford Northcote's good fortune to enjoy.

In the House of Commons, indeed, he enjoys an enviable reputation for fairness and moderation. Not many men have fewer bitter words or merely party speeches to regret than the ex-Indian Secretary. His conciliatory manner towards his opponents, the frankness with which he admits their virtues, and the leniency with which he judges their faults, all tend to increase his popularity. He seems to emulate Lord Derby's studied moderation and impartiality; and however desirable these qualities may be in the judge,

they are not always to be sought for in the active member of a political party. There is, too, in his speeches a vast amount of common sense. He may not aspire to the philosophical views of some members of past and present Cabinets ; but he is at least entirely free from the sentimental and misty ideas which float through the brains of too many of our politicians. He always knows the point at which he wishes to arrive ; and he can always describe his opinions in clear and simple language.

To oratorical ability he has no pretensions. His speeches are, indeed, chiefly remarkable for the rapidity with which they are delivered ; but they are at least lucid, and 'rich in saving common-sense.' He has been charged, and not altogether without foundation, with talking platitudes ; but, after all, a man had far better talk platitudes than talk nonsense, and there are not a few Cabinet Ministers who are chargeable with the latter offence. Upon all matters connected with the Indian Empire he shows an amount of knowledge which speaks much for his industry ; indeed it may be said that he is now the spokesman of the Opposition in the House of Commons upon Indian questions. His political opinions are staunchly Conservative, and throughout the critical period of 1866-8, he was an earnest and unswerving supporter of Mr. Disraeli, who has in him one of the most loyal of his colleagues.





EARL GREY.

DURING any great debate in the House of Lords, the 'strangers' in the gallery can hardly fail to notice the bent frame and withered features of the great Northumbrian Earl whose character we propose to sketch, and whose reputation so far surpasses his achievements. And those of them who have preconceived notions of the kind of man which Northumberland is traditionally supposed to produce, founded upon recollections, say of Algernon, Duke of Northumberland, or of that other equally eminent North Country man, George Stephenson, must have had those notions rudely dispelled when for the first time they beheld Earl Grey in the flesh. Tall he undoubtedly has been, but now his frame is bent with age and infirmity; he suffers from lameness, which compels him constantly to walk with the aid of a stout oaken stick; and his body is so frail and worn, that it seems as though a breath of wind would be more than it could resist.

Nor can it be said that his face bears any striking resemblance to that of his father, the hero of the Reform Act. It is, however, a remarkable face, and one well worth studying. The most diverse of characteristics are to be read in its deep lines and prominent

features. You see in that marred and weather-beaten countenance at once the traces of deep thought and of tempestuous passion, of marvellous shrewdness and thoughtless impulse. Something, too, there is about it which tells you that Lord Grey could, if he chose, sustain with dignity the highest offices to which the State could call him. There is an unmistakeable power, even though it be allied with petulance, in the large and mobile mouth ; whilst the eyes have a knack of fixing themselves upon the face of an adversary, and of seeming to penetrate through all disguises into the innermost secrets of that adversary's mind, which cannot produce a very comfortable impression upon the person against whom they are used.

It is not easy without exaggeration to describe a face in such a manner as to give a clear idea of the impression it produces upon one who has observed it long and closely, and Lord Grey's face is no exception to this rule ; nevertheless, there is no exaggeration in saying that it is a face plainly inscribed with the marks of power, of pride, and of passion. And nobody can have watched the debates in the House of Lords for any length of time, without discovering the same qualities in Lord Grey, by his manner when he is speaking. There is no mistaking the impulsive passion which displays itself as he springs from his seat on the cross-bench, and hobbling to the table imperiously extends his finger towards any other peer who has risen at the same moment with himself, as an indication that he does not intend to give way to him.

Lord Grey gives way to no one. He believes—and there are many who think him justified in that belief—that he is intellectually superior to almost every

other man in the House of Lords ; he looks upon himself as the only inspired lawgiver in that assemblage ; the only man to whom it is given clearly to read the signs of the times, and to foresee the ultimate results of the policy of to-day ; and believing this—and this, again, is a belief shared by many others—he never allows anyone to prevent, or even to delay, the utterance of those shrill harangues of his which it is both painful and exhausting to listen to ; but which, nevertheless, display more profound thought and more political acumen than the speeches of any of the recognised ‘orators’ of the present generation.

A striking instance of this weakness—if, indeed, we may give it that name—of Lord Grey’s, occurred during the debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill in the Upper House. At the close of one evening’s discussion, the Earl rose at the same time as Lord Lytton. The general cry on all sides was for Lytton. It was the first time that the great novelist and orator had ever risen to address that august body of which he is now a member, and those who had listened to some of his wonderfully polished and elaborate orations in the House of Commons, and those who only knew of his eloquence by repute, were alike anxious to secure a hearing for him. So from all sides the cry of ‘Lytton ! Lytton !’ was raised, and there was not even a small minority to support Lord Grey. But the Earl stood firm. It was a striking sight, and one which will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed it, to see the two great men thus silently opposing each other. Suddenly, however, Lord Grey gave way, and Lord Lytton moved the adjournment of the debate.

Everyone marvelled at the result who knew anything of the Earl's character. But the following night the mystery was explained. Lord Grey had given place to Lord Lytton under the idea that the latter intended to speak at once, and not simply to secure the precedence for the following evening. When he was undeceived he insisted upon his right to have the first place in that night's debate, and he gained his point. We all know what Earl Grey said in that debate, but the author of 'Pelham' and the 'Caxtons' has still to make his maiden speech in the House of Lords. This seems, perhaps, a trivial incident to dwell upon at such length, but it is one so thoroughly characteristic of Lord Grey, that it is worth repeating here. He is a man who acknowledges no superior, and who, holding a firmly-rooted belief that his own utterances are more valuable than any others to which his peers can listen, never hesitates to make them give ear to those utterances, whenever he has an opportunity of doing so.

Another of his peculiarities—a very noticeable one—is his apparent intense dislike to find himself acting in concert with the party to which he ostensibly belongs, or, indeed with any party at all. If two or three men are bent upon making mischief in the Liberal ranks, the chances are three to one in favour of Lord Grey being found amongst them. If a forlorn hope is being led by some elderly Whig statesman in the face of the advancing tide of democracy, Lord Grey's support may be confidently relied upon; but as for the rest, as for the great movements of either party, the great battles of the House, it was once said by an eminent minister with regard to him: 'We

never know where we have him !' To which the reply was : ' Oh yes we do—we always have him against us.' And this is nearer the truth than any other statement could have been.

Lord Grey is always against everybody. He is a political Ishmaelite, and even when he gives his vote with any particular party, he generally accompanies it with a hearty denunciation of the policy which he feels himself compelled to support in the lobby, and with a savage, or a scornful personal rebuke of those who are the leaders of that policy. But he is never so happy as when he finds himself—to adopt Lord Westbury's simile—like 'one crying in the wilderness,' when 'amongst the faithless, faithful only he,' his voice alone is to be heard advocating the 'high politics' which he professes.

It is almost ludicrous on such an occasion to see the sudden start, and the withering glance of amazement and indignation, with which he regards any interloper who ventures to repeat his arguments, or to express approval of his position. He evidently regards that position as being no longer his when any one else shares it with him, and more than once when he has succeeded in evoking an unexpected amount of support for the views he advocated, he has been known to retreat from those views precipitately, evidently under the impression that there must have been something unsound and 'uncanny' about them, in order to secure for them so large an amount of favour.

If these were Lord Grey's only characteristic qualities, he would stand by no means alone in the House of Lords ; for there are in that assembly one or two other men who are his equals in unyielding arrogance,

and eccentric singularity. But, in their case these characteristics are allied to something nearly akin to mental weakness ; whilst in that of Lord Grey they are accompanied by mental powers of a high, if not of the highest order. For few men will doubt that the Earl has at least considerable reason for the estimate of his own abilities to which we have already referred.

In neither House of Parliament can there be found so acute a political intellect as his. He was born a statesman, and from his youth upwards his training has been such as to develope the admirable political instinct which is one of his natural gifts. He was trained to the profession of high politics as other men are trained to painting or to commerce, and both his powers and his inclination tended so unquestionably towards the calling to which he was born, but into which it is the lot of most men to have to struggle through many difficulties, that it seemed impossible to entertain too high expectations of his future as a statesman.

Every external advantage which it is possible for a man to enjoy in the profession of politics was his from the first. The son of a great statesman, who was the honoured and successful leader of a party ; possessing rank, wealth, and political influence, able almost from the day when he attained his majority to command a seat in Parliament, he might, even if he had only been blessed with average ability, have gained the foremost rank amongst statesmen, and have earned for himself an honourable and lasting fame as a minister. But, when in addition to these advantages, and to great mental power, he had the keen sagacity and the unerring political instinct

which belong only to the true statesman—the born ruler of men—what might we not have expected of him? .

Lord Grey ought to have been the leader of a party, if his ambition lay in that direction; and he ought to have led his party with a wisdom, a moderation, and a success such as have not been seen in the case of any party leader of the present generation. And if he were really unable to submit to the wholesome restraints of party discipline, if he felt that he must win his laurels on a broader field, he ought to have placed himself above party, not beneath it, and to have been the mentor and the moderator of the political arena. He was well fitted for such an office. He might have filled it with honour to himself, and with immense advantage to his country. But what has he done? We carry short memories with us now-a-days, and men may therefore be forgiven if they forget that Lord Grey has ever held office at all, and has ever earned a right to a place in a series of Cabinet portraits. ‘Dod’ reminds the world however, that he has been successively Under-Secretary for the Colonies; Under-Secretary for the Home Department; Secretary of War, and Secretary of State for the Colonies. He has filled these offices, but what did he do in them? Where has he written his name in legible characters upon the statute-book? Where has he made his mark in the records of social or political progress?

The memory is searched in vain for an answer to these questions. Henry, Earl Grey, with matchless opportunities, with unsurpassed abilities, and even with a strong natural inclination for his part, has been

an utter and absolute failure as a statesman. It is hard to have to say such a thing of a man whose powers command our admiration and whose desire to 'play well his part' we do not doubt; but nevertheless, we are compelled to say that his public life has been a wasted life.

In the House of Lords, in which, though the world at large may hardly be prepared to believe it, there are not a few pitiable sights, there is no more melancholy spectacle than that presented by this great statesman, this man who was born to rule us, of whom more than of any other man of his day it might have been predicted that he was destined

To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whispers of a throne;

and who in his old age, with failing physical strength, though with undimmed mental faculties, has to look back upon a career which—in the eyes of the world, at any rate—has come to naught; and which, so far as men can judge, has been of no public benefit whatever. Most unfeignedly do we trust that in this matter the judgment of men may, after all, be a mistaken one; and that, if denied all other recompense, Lord Grey, in reviewing his career, may at least enjoy the smile of an approving conscience.

But how is it that the Earl's career has been so unsuccessful? To what mental peculiarities is the political isolation which has so long been his lot to be ascribed? We do not profess to read the secrets of Lord Grey's breast, nor can we say whether he is the victim of any special form of mental eccentricity. The cause of his melancholy failure as a politician

may possibly be an obscure one. We believe, however, it is to be ascribed rather to those infirmities of temper which he shares with lesser men than to any more remote or mysterious cause. Unable to brook control, his imperious spirit asserts its independence at all costs to himself, as well as to others. He knows—no one knows better—what he might achieve if he would but consent to relinquish a little of that independence, and to act in concert with others. But for those others he has only scorn and contempt; and he would recoil with indignation from the idea that he should give up even the least of his foibles in favour of their mature and deliberate convictions.

Possibly he might attain great influence in the councils of his party, in spite of the arrogant isolation which he seems to enjoy so much, if he would but consent to act towards those around him in a spirit of conciliation, or even of common courtesy. But amongst the things which he considers unworthy of his notice is that conciliatory tone of speech which does so much to oil the political machine, and to make its wheels run smoothly.

Those who have heard Lord Grey speaking in a great debate know the manner in which he flings about unworthy personalities—not, of course, vulgar personalities—but bitter, savage, and contemptuous jibes and taunts at his opponents generally. The Duke of Argyll spoke of him a few years ago as ‘the chartered libertine of debate.’ He is something more; for when he is once fairly set going on any great party question, he resembles nothing so much as a Malay running a-muck. His sharp and bitter

tongue stings all around ; and nobody escapes his scornful and almost ferocious assaults.

And yet, mingled with these bitter harangues, of which he delivers himself, there is so much that is statesmanlike in the highest sense of the word ; the views which he enunciates upon public questions are generally so broad, so clear, and so far-seeing, that, with all their defects, his speeches are far better worth studying than those of men of far higher repute. It is no pleasant task, as we have said already, to listen to them. Lord Grey speaks habitually in a shrill theatrical whisper ; and it is difficult even for those who are seated close to him to catch all that he says ; how his words are carried to the reporters seated in their distant gallery, and by them preserved for the study of future generations, is one of those mysteries which the public can never solve.

It is moreover thoroughly characteristic of the Earl, and an additional reason why it is painful to hear him speak, that he himself either seems altogether unconscious of his physical weakness, or else regards it as he regards every other obstacle in his path, with contempt, and looks upon it as being merely something to be overcome by his indomitable spirit.

On more than one occasion he has set himself tasks which would have tried the powers of the best speakers in either House of Parliament, and in spite of physical exhaustion, more complete than we ever witnessed before in the case of a man who was actually speaking, he has forced himself to complete those tasks.

It is true, that during the greater part of his speech he may have been absolutely inaudible to all save

one or two men, and that even the reporters may have failed to catch his words ; but he has said all that he wished to say—he has delivered his soul of the burden which lay upon it, and that is enough. For the effect produced by his speeches upon those who listen to him he is not responsible ; and he seems utterly careless as to what it may be. It is sufficient for him to know that he has spoken ; whether his words fall upon attentive ears or not is a matter altogether unworthy of his consideration ; only—as has before been said—he would rather that his views remained his alone, than that they should meet with general acceptance.

And as a rule he has his wish in this respect. It is, indeed, amazing to observe how slight is Lord Grey's influence in the House of Lords. His words, though they are so often pregnant with great truths, fall upon the ear of the House like words of little meaning ; and his advice is rarely followed, though many a time it is advice which might be followed with advantage to all parties. He has himself to thank for this. It is a part of his self-decreed fate.

Of his political sympathies it is hardly necessary to observe that they tend generally, indeed, almost invariably, towards the policy of the old Whig party—a party which will soon have become a thing of the past. For the men who are at present at the head of the Government of the country he has nothing but the most supreme contempt. He sees, even with a clearer eye than his immediate rivals, any inconsistencies and errors in Mr. Gladstone's course, and he has not the faintest spark of sympathy with the impulsiveness which has sometimes betrayed the Prime

Minister into false steps—although in his own character there is a trait not at all unlike that very impulsiveness which is so noticeable in Mr. Gladstone.

Mr. Bright he regards with a haughty scorn of which few men can have any adequate conception. The Earl seldom hesitates to impute motives to other men when they are taking a course of which he disapproves, and were we able to read the secrets of his heart we should no doubt find that the motives which he believes are the mainspring of Mr. Bright's actions are of anything but a creditable description. Mr. Lowe, no doubt, commanded his admiration, to a certain limited degree, when he was making his great speeches on Reform; but Mr. Lowe in office, and especially in high office, he regards as an intruder, an interloper, and a dangerous man.

On the other hand, it must not be supposed that Lord Grey regards the Conservative leaders with any greater amount of toleration. He stands alone, in fact, and has political sympathy with no man. Intellectually he is a giant, but he is a giant who has laid down his weapons, and who has roared so often that men have learned that there is nothing to be feared in him.

The most notable example in our day of the result of carrying independence to the extent of eccentricity, and of allowing arrogance and ill-nature to override the nobler parts of a man's character, he is more than anything else a beacon to warn others against the failings to which he has fallen a victim—a fair and stately beacon it is true, but not the less one telling of sunken rocks upon which a great career has suffered shipwreck, and a life once full of hope and promise been brought to nought.



THE MARQUIS OF SALISBURY.

SOME years ago Lord Robert Cecil, a younger son of the Marquis of Salisbury, was beginning his political career—beginning it in a manner which those who professed to form a judgment upon the subject, regarded as anything but a hopeful one.

For the young nobleman had the audacity to seek to win his spurs in two fields at the same time. As a member of the House of Commons, it was of course right and proper that he should follow the example of the other younger sons of great noblemen, and make speeches in which he measured himself without the slightest diffidence with the foremost statesmen and politicians of the day. In the House of Commons, all, from the Prime Minister down to the youngest member, are upon a footing of equality; and it is one of the most delightful privileges which a seat in that assembly confers, that a man, whatever may be his own position or want of position, whatever his ability or lack of ability, may at any time cross swords with the most distinguished political leaders.

There was, therefore, nothing remarkable in the fact that Lord Robert Cecil, though very young, and not yet thoroughly 'formed,' should early distinguish himself by making speeches, the prevailing character-

istics of which were flippancy and bitterness, and which were mainly directed against men who were the recognised chiefs of their parties.

But it was altogether a different matter when it began to be whispered about that the young patrician was endeavouring to win for himself a name in another arena, and that he was already becoming known as one of that band of brilliant writers which gave to the early career of the *Saturday Review* a splendour such as has scarcely been enjoyed by any other political journal. Then indeed men who had the proper contempt entertained by society for the mean creatures whose lot it is to guide public opinion by anonymous pens, shook their heads, and 'hoped the young man might not live to regret the step he had taken ;' whilst he found—doubtless to his surprise—that even in the most powerful and distinguished legislative assembly in the world, a man who is known to be connected with the press gains for himself additional consideration, even though it may be a consideration closely allied to fear and dislike.

The Marquis of Salisbury is not a man to be flattered, and we therefore do not hesitate to say that his early career was one which, though it might be full of promise, was yet in itself anything but brilliant. It is said that when Lord Robert began to write for the *Saturday Review*, his literary productions were little, if at all, above the level of mediocrity ; but that the late editor of that journal found in him the most tractable and diligent of pupils, and that eventually, though by slow and laborious steps, he gained not merely proficiency but genuine power in the use of his pen.

We do not vouch for the truth of this statement, though it comes to us upon good authority ; but if it be true it is strikingly characteristic of Lord Salisbury's whole life.

His career has been one of steady progress—the result of conscientious hard work—and the position which he now occupies is due far more to his diligence and perseverance than to the accident of his birth. His political life, it has more than once been said, may be divided into three stages, distinguished by the three different titles he has borne. He began life as Lord Robert Cecil ; he had gained a great step in advance upon his starting-point, when, through the death of his elder brother, he became Viscount Cranborne, and as Marquis of Salisbury he has shown a ripeness and breadth of judgment such as were hardly to be expected of him in either of the earlier periods of his life.

As to the first of these periods it was one in which—speaking figuratively rather than literally—it may be said of him that he was 'very young.' The prevailing impression produced by his writings during that period is the impression of extreme youth. They are crude, as very youthful productions generally are ; they are remarkable too for an acidity which is not altogether unpleasant in a young man's first essays, but which would be simply intolerable if habitually displayed by a man of the world of mature age and judgment. They are flippant also, and careless. In fact they are boyish ; and, like everything else boyish, they display that want of finish which, according to Mr. Disraeli, still distinguishes Lord Salisbury's invective.

It was, however, during this period that Lord Robert won his spurs. He became known as one of the most dashing skirmishers in the political battlefield. Daring, even to audacity, he was at all times ready to rush single-handed into the fight with those who were his superiors in weight of metal; and though he received many an overthrow in these rough tilts, he succeeded in establishing for himself a reputation which was no doubt intensely gratifying to him as a young man, but which could hardly have satisfied his more mature ambition. He became known as a cynic who was ready to scoff at everything, as a critic whose eyes were keen to search out the smallest flaw in the armour of an opponent, as the possessor of a bitter tongue which was able at all times to sting those against whom it was employed; as a master of invective, which, even though it might lack finish, most assuredly did not lack power. There was, of course, something very juvenile about this kind of reputation. The danger was that Lord Robert might have rested satisfied with it. Had he done so, he would by this time have degenerated into another John Arthur Roebuck, or a lesser Earl Grey.

But as years passed on, and the young nobleman, in whose private life there were not a few circumstances affecting the view he took of society and politics, gained wider ideas of the world in which he lived, the cynicism, which was his prevailing characteristic, was softened; and though he still showed himself impatient of party discipline, and unwilling to submit to the restraints which bound his companions and friends; though there was still, in fact, not a little of the Bohemian about him, he showed that he was learning

useful lessons, and was gradually finding for himself his real path in life. This transition era is that associated with the title which he bore for a few years of Lord Cranborne.

It was during this time that he succeeded to high office under the Crown, and became the ruler, as Indian Secretary, of our splendid Eastern Empire. Here was a work which might have satisfied the ambition of any man, and which fully satisfied that of Lord Cranborne. He was able now to lay aside his reviewing, and those smart criticisms on the politics of the day, in which he had spared neither friend nor foe, and one of the effects of which had been to open an ever-widening breach between himself and the leader of his party in the House of Commons.

The great task of governing India, and governing it well, occupied all his time and attention. He knew literally nothing of that task when he entered upon it; but those who worked under him in the India Office are still ready to bear testimony to the devotion with which he laboured; to the unremitting anxiety he displayed to make himself master of the minutest details of the duties imposed upon him; to the ceaseless industry with which he worked by day and night, in order that he might have nothing to reproach himself with in the performance of his Herculean task. The result is, that those associated with him in the Government of India are ready now to bear testimony to the fact that his tenure of the Secretaryship was in many respects more successful than that of most of the men who have been his immediate predecessors and successors.

It was during his term of office that he succeeded

in a great degree in laying aside the flippant cynicism of his earlier manner. His official speeches were distinguished by their clearness and their brevity—in both of which respects they formed a marked and most agreeable contrast to those of the statesman whom he had succeeded, Lord Halifax ; and, weighted by the responsibilities of great office, he was not long in learning that the art of governing the world is not so simple and so easily acquired as in his more juvenile days he had imagined.

Those who watched Lord Cranborne at this period of his career must have been led to the conclusion that the Conservative party possessed in him a statesman of high promise, and an administrator whose abilities were likely to prove of great service to his country. Still, at times there were explosions in the old Robert Cecil vein ; and still occasionally he sneered at Mr. Bright, and Mr. Bright rewarded him with good round, ringing dispraise. Have they both forgotten those days, we wonder ? We almost think they must have done so, for they are now said to be fast personal friends. Then came the great explosion which for a time threatened to bring the Conservative Ministry to shipwreck, and which put an end to Lord Cranborne's official career.

It is not necessary that we should enter into the question of that famous secession in these pages, or should discuss the point whether Mr. Disraeli or Lord Cranborne were truer to the interests of the Conservative party, or to those of the country, in the course which each adopted. It is enough to know that the Viscount, who had been one of Mr. Disraeli's most unsparing critics, broke loose at this point from his

leader and his party, and for a time—to use his own words—stepped aside from the active life of politics. It was not unnatural that this event should be accompanied by a certain retrograde movement towards his former position of Parliamentary free lance and general cynic; but it was a movement soon checked, and the backward step he had thus taken was to some extent retraced when he succeeded to his father's title, and entered the House of Lords as the third Marquis of Salisbury.

That event is not so distant that we cannot all recall the curious burst of public lamentation with which it was received. Had it been proposed to bury the new Marquis by his father's side in the family vault of the Cecils, or to banish him to some desert island, he could hardly have been more openly or generally mourned over, than when he was raised to the House of Lords. It was a striking proof of the predominance acquired by the House of Commons, and of the universality of the belief that a public man was nothing unless he occupied a seat in the Lower Chamber. During the time that has passed since Lord Cranborne became Marquis of Salisbury he has done a little to remove this idea from the public mind, and to show that the House of Lords has still to perform many functions more important than that of registering the decrees of the Commons. And that he has added immensely to the strength and the influence of the Chamber in which he now sits, no one who has watched its proceedings of late can doubt.

He has taken another forward step himself, and he has shown a breadth of statesmanship presenting a strange contrast to the hard and narrow views with

which he originally began life ; but he has done more, he has given the House of Lords an additional claim to the respect and esteem of the public, and has added greatly to its legislative and deliberative strength. Years have added breadth, and experience has given ripeness to his views, and those who see in the Marquis of Salisbury one of the foremost and ablest statesmen of the day, cannot but marvel at the change wrought in him within the past decade.

And yet even now there are far too frequent revelations of 'the old Adam.' At ever-increasing intervals there are brief outbursts of the cynical bitterness which distinguished Lord Robert Cecil. It must not be supposed, however, that these are indicative of the real nature of the Marquis of Salisbury. The plain fact is, that occasionally in the heat of debate the Marquis is the victim of excitement, and utters words which, in his cooler moments, he regrets. The explosion in the House of Lords on the last night on which the Irish Church Bill was debated there was one of these occasions. It had not a little to do in bringing about the compromise which immediately followed.

But no one can doubt that in time Lord Salisbury will outgrow the tendency to relapse into his youthful errors. He has already succeeded in a remarkably short space of time in making his mark as a Minister ; he has more recently shown that he is the equal of any of the distinguished statesmen who share with him the honour of a seat in the House of Lords ; and when he is called back to office—an event which will be hailed with pleasure by members of all political parties—we do not doubt he will justify the expectations formed of him by his friends ; and will also

be able to give convincing proof that the keenest sense of personal honour is not incompatible with fidelity to party ties, and a diligent and useful devotion to the public service.

We have said nothing as yet of Lord Salisbury's appearance, or of his manner of speaking. About both there is something hardly to be described, but which young ladies would indicate by the much-abused word 'interesting,' and which we may endeavour to convey to our readers by the word melancholy. It is but seldom that his fine powerful face does not wear a certain air of melancholy, and the tones of his voice are, as a rule, subdued and plaintive.

He is an effective public speaker—terse, clear, and vigorous at all times; and though not eloquent, in the ordinary acceptation of the word—that is to say, not rhetorical in his speech—he is never feeble, and he frequently speaks with remarkable power. Now that the acidity of his earlier years is passing away—nothing but a grateful flavour remaining to remind us of what he once was—no one can fail to derive pleasure from listening to him when he is speaking on any question of importance; and the dignity and courtesy which, as a rule, characterise his manner, well befit the place in which he now occupies so distinguished a position. Lord Salisbury has achieved so much, has gained such great victories over himself, and has made such a marked advance in his views of life, that it is impossible to say where he may stop, or what degree of fame and power he may not eventually reach. He is still a young man, and upon the whole it may more safely be predicted of him than of any of his contemporaries in his own party, that he is destined to take

high, and even the highest rank in the service of the Crown and of the people. Whenever he does so, the country may rest assured that it will have in him a most conscientious statesman, as well as a most laborious and painstaking Minister; whilst, judging by the past, it is not easy to prescribe a limit to the success which he may attain as an administrator.





THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.

THOUGH it has fallen to the lot of the Duke of Richmond to be chosen unanimously as the leader of the Conservative party in the House of Lords, his political biography has yet to be written. The Duke's personal modesty and the force of circumstances have combined to prevent his taking so active a part in political life as might otherwise have been the case ; and to the outside world he is comparatively an unknown and untried man.

Nevertheless, no one who knows much of the inner life of politics can doubt that the Conservative peers chose wisely when they called upon the Duke of Richmond, a few years ago, to take the leadership vacated by Lord Cairns. It is quite true that the Duke does not possess and does not pretend to possess those higher qualities of statesmanship which distinguish Lord Salisbury and Lord Derby ; and it is equally true that he is not, like Lord Cairns, blessed with the faculty of thinking upon one's legs, which is so great an advantage to a party leader. Nevertheless, he has many admirable qualities which tend to fit him for the post which he has now assumed, and, without venturing upon invidious comparisons with other distinguished men who sit beside him upon the

front opposition bench in the House of Lords, we cannot hesitate to acknowledge that he was the best man available to his party for the leadership.

There are many able men seated near him, but upon the whole there are none—always making the exceptions we have already named—who have the requisite qualifications of a leader to so large an extent as the Duke of Richmond. More than once in the course of these papers we have had to point out what are the qualifications required in a party leader. Tact and temper are perhaps the most important. Clearness of statement is another hardly less so; facility of speech is equally valuable. But over and above all these there must be the power of discerning the weak point in the enemy's harness, and of so directing the arrows of the Opposition that they may strike between the joints of the armour. No doubt this last qualification is a very unamiable one; but in plain words it means simply the power to detect the vulnerable points about the foe, and to strike sharp and strong at those points. Unamiable as this quality may seem to be, however, it is a very essential one; if our party leaders did not possess it they would soon convert a well-organised army into a rabble, or they would give to the party which was in the ascendant for the time a complete immunity from the fear of hostile criticism.

It is because the Duke of Richmond is well supplied with these varied qualifications that we venture to anticipate for him a successful career as leader of the Conservative peers. He is not a statesman of the first rank, but he has that which is next to the highest statesmanship, tact. He can see which course

abounds with shoals and quicksands, and which affords room for fair and successful sailing. It would be flattery to say that he could of his own wit devise a policy for a great party, but give him a policy to carry out and he will show a quick appreciation at once of the strength and the weakness of that policy, and will bring it to a successful end with greater ease than some men of deeper thought would display under similar circumstances.

He cannot profess to compete with Lord Granville in the possession of that exquisite urbanity which makes the Foreign Secretary the ideal representative of 'sweetness and light' in the Cabinet, but the Duke of Richmond is nevertheless blessed with an eminently happy temper. He has not, for instance, the crochety irritableness of Lord Russell or the Celtic impetuosity of the Duke of Argyll. He can present an unruffled front to the enemy even in the heat of an angry debate, and he can prove at all times that he is not blind to the excellencies of the party to which he is opposed.

It is wonderful to observe how great an influence a little exhibition of an ability to appreciate the good qualities of opponents has in soothing the asperities of debate. There are men in the House of Commons at this moment whose popularity is remarkable, and who enjoy a reputation for statesmanlike ability which it is certain cannot be based upon any actual achievements. When the character of these men is enquired into, the only manner in which it is possible to account for the position they occupy is by ascribing it to their fairness towards those to whom they are opposed.

The Duke of Richmond, therefore, having frequently shown that, even when differing most widely from those who sit on the opposite side of the House, he can yet recognise and appreciate their good qualities, possesses one of the most valuable of the qualifications which the party leader ought to have, Clearness of statement again is not the least important qualification of a party leader, and here those who have heard the brief and business-like speeches of the Duke of Richmond cannot question that he possesses this qualification to a large extent. There have been cases quite recently of statesmen, who, though admirably adapted in all other respects to lead a party, have nevertheless failed utterly in the attempt to do so, simply because they had not that command of words which is necessary to make a statement in such a manner that it may be understood by those to whom it is addressed.

The shambling, slovenly manner in which some eminent statesmen, whose ability no one could doubt, are in the habit of conveying their thoughts to the House, has proved an effectual bar to advancement in their political career, and has led the outside world to form a very inadequate opinion of their real powers. There are in fact, in politics as at the bar, politicians of the chamber as well as politicians of the senate—men who, though they could devise a great measure of policy, or give invaluable advice to their party, are totally incapable of expressing their thoughts in public with clearness and precision. These men may be, and indeed often are, admirable administrators; some of them have controlled the

affairs of the Colonies, or our Indian empire, with marked ability and success, and others have been known to limited circles of the initiated as the wisest and most honoured counsellors of a ministry or a party.

But though they may exercise vast influence in this manner, none of them can hope to become successful leaders. Under the Parliamentary system, the tongue is almost as essential as the brain; and where complete command over the former is not possessed, a superabundant supply of the latter cannot make up for the deficiency. The Duke of Richmond, however, is a clear, concise, and effective speaker. With no pretensions to the reputation of an orator, he can say what he wants to say in language which everybody will understand, and he has not unfrequently made speeches which have been both valuable in themselves, and powerful influences upon the course of a great debate.

His readiness in public speaking is another of his qualifications for the post he has now assumed. We know that there are men in both Houses of Parliament who, whilst possessed of all the other qualities required by a party leader, and enjoying extensive fame as orators, are yet unable to place themselves at the head of any considerable following, because of their inability to take part in a debate without having duly prepared themselves for doing so. Even Mr. Bright, unquestionably the greatest Parliamentary orator of the age, is comparatively tame and feeble when he speaks without preparation—those thrilling perorations of his, which have more power to move the heart of

the House of Commons than almost any other influence which can be brought to bear upon it, are almost without exception carefully composed in the orator's study, and committed to memory.

Mr. Horsman is a yet more noticeable instance of this failure in the power of effective extempore speaking. His polished essays, though they are amongst the most remarkable specimens of Parliamentary eloquence which we possess, are all carefully written out beforehand ; they are literary rather than oratorical exercises. Macaulay, we know, laboured under the same deficiency, and everybody has heard the story of the well-thumbed manuscript, scored and underscored, in all the emphatic passages, which he sent up to the Reporters' Gallery in response to an application for the ' notes ' of his speech.

The present Lord Derby is another eminent man of vast ability as a statesman, who is nevertheless anything but a ready speaker. Perhaps it is more his habitual caution than any lack of fluency that leads him to take this course, but we speak on authority when we say that he too is in the habit of committing all his more important speeches to paper before he delivers them. Of course those who labour under this defect cannot make thoroughly efficient Parliamentary leaders. One of the most important, it might almost be said the most important task which such a man has to discharge is that of replying on a great debate.

No one who has seen the marvellous ability displayed by Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone in performing this task can doubt its importance. Either of these great statesmen will rise at one o'clock in the

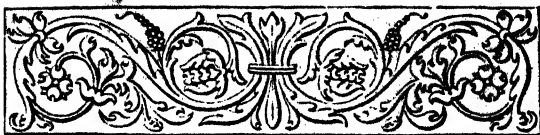
morning and reply, not superficially, but with genuine power and effect, to a speech the last echoes of which are still ringing in the ears of the House. We do not pretend of course that the Duke of Richmond is equal in this respect to either of the leaders in the House of Commons, but he is nevertheless a ready speaker—he does not need to prepare his shots with laborious care in his study before he fires them, and that is, after all, the main thing. All that is wanted of him as leader is that he should be able not only to express his thoughts clearly, but to do so without any longer preparation, any more complete arrangement of his ideas, than that which he can have in the heat of a debate, or whilst the opponent to whom he is to reply is yet speaking.

Of the Duke's politics we need not say much. He is a most consistent member of the Conservative party; being perhaps as much a Conservative of the modern school as any duke can be expected to be. He would not be likely to adhere to a form which had no longer any meaning or vitality; nor is he one who will advocate any policy merely because it is the policy of which a majority of his party approves. Indeed on this point he gave clear proof of his independence in 1869, when he severed for a time his connection with the Conservative leaders, because he found himself unable to act with them upon the question of the Irish Church. Independence in forming opinions, and courage in expressing them, are not to be denied to the man who could do this under such circumstances as those which then prevailed.

The Duke occupied a seat in the House of Commons for nearly twenty years, thus gaining an ad-

mirable political training ; he has been President of the Poor Law Board and the Board of Trade, in which capacities he acquitted himself with marked success ; and he is now in his fifty-fourth year—the very prime of political life.





LORD WESTBURY.

IT has been the fortune of Lord Westbury to experience every extreme of public opinion. He has been one of the most popular men in England, and he has been one of the most unpopular ; he has been exalted to a position of dignity and power in connection with his profession such as few have occupied before or since, and he has found himself thrust from office in disgrace, and followed into his retirement by the satire and abuse of mankind. There are few more remarkable political careers than his in the whole domain of English history.

It is not, as we know, an unexampled thing for an Englishman of the middle class, who has adopted the law as a profession, to rise to the woolsack, and there is nothing, therefore, to marvel at in the fact that a doctor's son became Lord Chancellor when Lord Westbury was raised to the peerage. But there are Chancellors and Chancellors ; and it is not often that England has seen a Lord Chancellor whose personal place in the House of Lords has been so prominent as that occupied by Lord Westbury. He has been not merely a great lawyer—and there is perhaps no man of his generation who can compete with his fame in that respect—but he has been also a

great statesman, and the share he has taken both in the active work of legislation and in debate, has been such as to entitle him to a place in the foremost rank of English politicians.

What is it that the spectâtor sees when he looks at Lord Westbury? The series of cruelly-clever caricatures with which an Italian artist recently provided the English public, contains no more successful portrait than that of the nobleman who is described by his own self-assumed title of 'An Eminent Christian,' but who is better known to the world as Lord Westbury. A stout gentleman, somewhat below the middle height, with snowy hair fringing, not covering his head, and a fat, pink-hued face which gives the superficial observer the idea of the personification of amiable benevolence.

Such an observer would fail altogether to detect the evidences of great mental power which are to be found in Lord Westbury's head and face, but he would also fail to detect the evidences of certain other qualities the possession of which he is not so much to be envied. It takes a long and close observation of the face to detect the strange sly twinkle of the small eye, and to understand the real meaning of the simper which seems always to be playing about the corners of the mouth. When these things are fully observed and understood, however, people are as a rule inclined to draw a distinction between Lord Westbury the man and Lord Westbury the lawyer, and to place the latter upon a height to which they have no idea of elevating the former. His is indeed a remarkable face. We should be sorry to express in these pages our opinion as to all that is to be seen in it. It is

enough to say that it is not a prepossessing face ; that the velvety softness which appears at first sight to cover it, is soon seen to be something else very different from that which it seems ; and that the smooth suavity, the bland smile, are readily capable of being exchanged for other characteristics of a very dissimilar kind.

We do not propose to trace Lord Westbury's career since he entered upon public life. He distinguished himself very early at his university, taking a double first-class at an unusually early age, and one of the traditions connected with his history refers to the fact that when a very young man, soon after he had been called to the Bar, he won great distinction in a suit which his college had undertaken at his express instigation, and in which his opinion (opposed to that of men of much longer standing in his profession) turned out in the end to be correct.

His rise at the Bar was upon the whole a rapid one, and he soon became known in the Chancery Courts as a profound lawyer, and an acute and not particularly scrupulous critic. Then he found his way into Parliament, and became one of the select knot of competitors who, having advanced thus far in the race, seem to see their goal—the woolsack—already in view. Here he speedily acquired a reputation for a peculiar kind of caustic wit which was enjoyed intensely by the House. Ere long the Solicitor-Generalship fell into his hands, and this was in due time followed by the higher post of Attorney-General, both of which were of course capped by the final honour of the woolsack, bestowed upon him by Lord Palmerston. There is nothing exceptional in such a

career as this. It is not in the success which for many years attended all Lord Westbury's efforts that his highest fame consists. It is to be found rather in his fall from office, and in the peculiar qualities of mind which have made his name a household word both in Parliament and at the Bar.

As to Lord Westbury's fall, we have no desire to discuss at any length the circumstances attending it. We fancy that most people would now be of opinion that the noble and learned lord was rather hardly dealt with, and that after all he was punished more for the sins of other persons than for his own. It was his misfortune to be the father of a son whose character is so notorious that it is no breach of good faith, or of ordinary delicacy, to refer to it. That this son took advantage of his father's vast influence as Lord Chancellor will, we believe, not be questioned; but we imagine that most people will now admit that Lord Westbury himself had clean hands in the transaction which led to his withdrawal from office.

Lord Palmerston, according to his wont, stood gallantly by his colleague when the latter was assailed with a rancour which posterity will hardly be able to understand; but even Lord Palmerston's great influence was insufficient to maintain Lord Westbury on the woolsack, and all the world knows how, in a speech remarkable for its quiet dignity and its scrupulous good taste, he stepped aside from the honours he had fairly won by unremitting labour, and retired from official into private life.

Posterity, we say, will hardly be able to understand the bitterness with which Lord Westbury was assailed

with reference to the matter which cost him his possession of the woolsack. The present generation, however, labours under no such difficulty. It knows that it was not on account of his indiscretion in the administration of a single paltry piece of patronage that Lord Westbury was driven from office, but because of his general character as a public man. Possessed of splendid talents, rich in a boundless store of legal knowledge and experience, he might have had a smooth voyage through life, unchequered by the storms which rage round less gifted men. But, unfortunately, Lord Westbury's talent never shone to such advantage as when it was employed in stinging with cruel sarcasms those with whom it was his lot to be brought in contact.

What he was in his earlier days, as a rising man at the Bar, we do not profess to know ; but it is at least certain that when he had risen, and had become a celebrity both in the House of Commons and in his own profession, he seemed to abandon himself to a sort of mania for annoying and wounding other persons. It is difficult to believe that he ever intended to be as unamiable as he was ; but it is nevertheless certain that he succeeded in hurting the feelings of almost every man who came in contact with him. Possessed of remarkable powers of wit and sarcasm, he never seemed happy unless those powers were being employed at the expense of some unfortunate being, whose only offence was the fact that he did not possess Lord Westbury's ability. The counsel who were opposed to him in the cases in which he was engaged, the members who ventured to criticise his speeches or measures in the House of Commons,

the very judges before whom he used to plead—all were made to smart under the lash of his bitter, stinging tongue.

When he was raised to the woolsack the matter became still worse. Lord Westbury had evidently gone to the House of Lords with the idea that he was a man of genius, henceforth doomed to the companionship of those who in intellect and in knowledge of the world were mere babes ; and under the influence of this idea he proceeded to treat his colleagues in the Upper House with a cavalier insolence to which they had never before been accustomed, and which they were by no means slow to resent.

Many stories which, if they be not true, are at least very good, are told of Lord Westbury's sayings with respect to his duties on the woolsack. One only need be repeated, as affording in a concise and epigrammatic form a fair representation of the noble lord's estimate of the rest of the world and of himself. 'When I was at the Bar,' he is reported to have said, 'I spent my time in talking to noodles. Since I became Lord Chancellor I have spent my time in listening to them.' A man who holds such an opinion as that which is thus tersely expressed, must at all times be a somewhat disagreeable colleague, and still more disagreeable opponent ; but when he has in addition the intellectual ability and the powers of sarcasm which distinguish Lord Westbury, he becomes really terrible in his power of wounding and annoying. Need we wonder that before very long, the Lord Chancellor became one of the most unpopular of public men in the inner circle of politics?

With the outside world he retained the popularity

which he had earned by his legal reputation and his many efforts to promote beneficial legislation with regard to the practice of our courts of law. But it was impossible that men who were daily being brought in contact with him, and who had daily to wince under his bitter jibes and sneers, should continue to regard him with simple admiration for his intellectual powers. They might continue to admire those powers, but their admiration was more than counterbalanced by their personal dislike.

It was during his tenure of the Lord Chancellorship that one or two of those mortal combats occurred, which attracted so much attention at the time, and revived public interest in the House of which he had become a member. There was, for instance, his famous battle with Lord Chelmsford, on the question of compensation to the officers of the Insolvent Debtors Court, which was celebrated in 'Punch,' in one of Mr. Tenniel's best cartoons. Who that witnessed that combat will forget it? On Lord Chelmsford's side was all the right, on Lord Westbury's all the might. The ex-Chancellor attacked the Chancellor with an amount of determination that the amiable Frederick Thesiger does not often display in personal squabbles, and he succeeded in inflicting some very ugly blows upon his opponent. But when that learned lord's turn came the fortune of battle changed. With mellifluous accents, and bland simper, Lord Westbury succeeded not only in stinging his assailant almost beyond endurance, but in enlisting on his own behalf the sympathies of his audience.

Still more celebrated is his encounter with the Bishop of Oxford, upon one of the many questions

raised by the action of Convocation, with respect to 'Essays and Reviews.' It was upon this occasion that Lord Westbury cruelly dragged into the debate certain epithets which have been familiarly, not to say contemptuously, applied to Bishop Wilberforce: and, amidst roars of laughter, spoke of the 'saponaceous' character of certain documents upon which he was commenting. The Bishop winced, and took an early opportunity of avenging himself upon the Chancellor; but after all, oil cannot compete with vinegar, and the latter, as usual, had the best of the conflict.

Nevertheless, even the most powerful of men may make too many enemies, and it has been the lot of Lord Westbury to prove the truth of this statement by his own bitter experience. Confident in the strength of his splendid intellect, and in the fear which his matchless powers of sarcasm awakened in all who had to come in contact with him, the Lord Chancellor pursued his way with a recklessness that was almost sublime. It mattered not to him at whom he struck, or whose was the body upon which he trampled in his onward path; though all hands might be raised against him, he still believed that his own powers were sufficient to enable him to win in the unequal contest.

And for a time it was so. The men who were writhing under his cruel witticisms and his polished epigrams found themselves helpless in their struggle with him, and were compelled to bide their time with such patience as they could command. But at last their turn came. It is not for us to rake up all the scandals which surrounded the closing years of Lord Westbury's Chancellorship. With his private life—be it good, bad, or indifferent—we have nothing to

do ; and we are willing to leave his public failings in obscurity.

It is enough to say that the ever-growing irritation which he succeeded in producing amongst all classes in Parliament at length found vent in a cry for his removal from the woolsack, upon a charge connected with one of the many appointments which he had to make as Lord Chancellor. The cry, kept up with much persistency, and swelled by all who had ever come within the reach of that stinging tongue, was at last successful ; and one afternoon the noble lord announced, with much dignity and even pathos, that he voluntarily gave up his honours and retired into private life.

For a time Lord Westbury, like most men under similar circumstances, played the part of a misanthrope. He retired to Italy, and, in a secluded and beautiful estate of which he had become the owner, led a life which had very little in common with the ordinary life of an English lawyer or politician. He had shaken the dust of England off his feet, and had announced to his friends that he never more intended to trouble himself with the public affairs of his native country.

But the attractions of political life proved too strong for him. Seldom, indeed, is it that the man who has once mixed in the conflict of parties, who has once tasted the stern joy of that contest which is never at an end, and which for ages has been handed down from father to son, and from generation to generation, in this self-governed land, can leave the battle-field and remain at rest in his own home, whilst the smoke and noise of the conflict still reach

him. Political life is like dram-drinking : it grows upon a man, and when once it has been fairly indulged in, it can never, in the vast majority of cases, be abandoned. So Lord Westbury was not very long in finding that the pleasures of life in an Italian villa, though delightful for a time, begin to pall upon the man who has been accustomed to a more active state of existence, and before many months were over he had found his way back to England, and re-appeared in that House of Lords which it was understood had beheld him for the last time.

Well, England could have better spared a better man ; and few people were sorry when they heard that the debates of the Upper House were once more to be enlivened by that peculiar and inimitable wit of which Lord Westbury is so consummate a master. He has not taken any very active share in party debate since he came back ; but he has delivered not a few effective speeches, notable among them being that in which he criticised the Irish Church Bill, and, with the mild resignation of an eminent Christian man, likened himself to 'one crying in the wilderness'—a simile which was received with a burst of laughter such as is not often heard in that decorous assembly. Yet, even when he does not speak, he is a power in the House. Seated upon the front bench below the gangway, by the side of the other great statesmen who have retired from active business, but who are ready at any moment to throw themselves into the fray, he is a man at once to be courted and feared, and he thus continues to exercise an influence upon the counsels of the House of Lords, of which the outside world is altogether unconscious.


There are few men who have a more peculiar manner in speaking than Lord Westbury. Indeed, there is something irresistibly amusing in the spectacle he presents when he is delivering one of those wonderful speeches in which the most admirable moral sentiments are flavoured with jests that are remarkable for their pungency rather than their delicacy, and in which the dulness of an ordinary disquisition is enlivened by personalities by no means remarkable for their scrupulous fairness. The fat pink face, the twinkling eyes, the soft velvety voice, and the cruel smile that hovers about the mouth, all add to the effect of the speech itself; whilst the cheers and laughter with which each successive point is received, show that, when he likes, Lord Westbury is still able to make what Mr. Tozer would call 'an 'it' in the House of Lords.

At the Bar and on the Bench the noble and learned lord was equally remarkable for the peculiarities of his manner. When he was a practising barrister he used to irritate unspeakably the judges or law lords before whom he had to plead by the cool and almost insolent manner in which he treated them. One of the many stories told concerning this period of his life—and a whole volume might be compiled of Westburyana—relates to his appearance on one occasion as counsel before the House of Lords. When he was called upon to address their lordships, instead of proceeding to do so at once, he apparently engaged himself in private devotions, assuming the attitude befitting an eminent Christian when engaged in prayer. Their lordships looked at Sir Richard in some astonishment, but waited patiently for a minute

or two. At last one of them ventured to hint that they were prepared to listen to the Attorney-General. The suggestion fell unnoticed upon the great lawyer's ear. 'Come, Mr. Attorney,' at last said the then Lord Chancellor, 'we have been waiting for you for several minutes.' Slowly the good man unclasped his hands, opened his eyes, and turned towards the House with a merry twinkle : 'Your lordships, I fear, are somewhat impatient,' were the only words of apology or explanation which he vouchsafed to offer for conduct that was, to say the least, unusual on the part of an Attorney-General.

One of the most amusing episodes of his life was his famous address to the young men of Wolverhampton upon Christian Love. Of that address it is perhaps only necessary to say that those who knew Lord Westbury best were most astonished at the fact of his appearing as the champion and advocate of the Christian religion ; whilst none could forbear to smile when they saw that the man whose bitter tongue had made enemies for him in every rank of life, ascribed his success in his political and professional career to the fact that from early youth he had cultivated the graces of Christian love and charity. Nevertheless, it is only fair to say that 'the Gospel according to Bethell,' as it was christened by the 'Saturday Review,' was in theory a gospel which might well be commended to the approval of mankind.

This sketch of Lord Westbury would be altogether one-sided and incomplete if it took no notice of the really **great** and noble work which he has accomplished ~~as a~~ legal reformer. For more than a quarter of a ~~century~~ he has been the foremost advocate of



that fusion of law and equity which it seems at last likely will soon be realised. It is more than twenty years since he announced, at a public dinner, the fact that his object was to 'swallow up law and equity;' and the various schemes of legal reform with which he has since been connected, show that if he has been unable to accomplish that feat at one mouthful, he has been doing his best to accomplish it piecemeal.

His share in the carrying of the Divorce Court Bill through the House of Commons, where he had to fight its battle almost single-handed against the leading members of the High Church party, procured for him from Lord Palmerston the offer of the judgeship of that Court as soon as it was established. He declined the offer, believing that better things were in store for him. This is only one of the many attempts he has made to improve our legal system, and it cannot be doubted that if he had retained possession of the woolsack he would have accomplished a really good work in this direction. As it is, his future fame must rest far more upon his legal than upon his political reputation; though he will long be remembered in Parliament as one of the wittiest and most sarcastic of debaters.





MR. FORSTER.

THREE YEARS ago the position of no man in the House of Commons was more enviable than that of Mr. Forster, Vice-President of the Council, and at that time still shut out of the sacred pale of the Cabinet. Writing of him at that date it fell to our lot to say that, 'There is no one amongst the junior members of the present Administration whose future is likely to surpass that which appears to lie before him. He has made for himself a most enviable position in Parliament, where he has succeeded in gaining not only the confidence of the leaders of his own party, but the esteem and respect of all his opponents.

'A staunch Liberal, a member of one of the most advanced, if not of *the* most advanced section of the Radical party, and a man whose unflinching devotion to his own principles does not require to be tested, he is nevertheless singularly popular amongst the Conservatives generally, and there is unquestionably no man now sitting on the Treasury Bench who can command so favourable a hearing for any measure he has to propose from both sides of the House, as the right honourable gentleman whose Rabelaisian face forms one of the features of that post of honour.

'We may go further than this, and say that at the

present moment, after Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Lowe, there does not seem to be anyone on the Liberal side of the House who would be likely a few years hence to compete with Mr. Forster for the possession of the highest post in the Administration. It is no exaggeration—it is rather the carefully-formed opinion of the ablest critics—that the member for Bradford is more likely than any other of those who are his compeers in parliamentary standing to attain the crowning honour of the Premiership. In short, Mr. Forster may be described as “the most rising man” in his party.’

Since these lines were written, we have seen the memorable ‘Nonconformist Revolt.’ A meeting of very respectable and worthy gentlemen has been held at Manchester to discuss the failings of the Education Bill, and we are assured that at this meeting Mr. Forster’s name was never mentioned without being received with yells of execration. To what are we to ascribe this sudden and remarkable change in the sentiments of the Nonconformists—or rather of a section of the Nonconformists—towards Mr. Forster? A few years ago there was no member of the Liberal party who was more generally popular with these very people than the Member for Bradford. Now men are not ashamed to represent him as a traitor to Liberalism, and to ascribe to his feebleness of action and uncertainty of purpose the ‘revolt’ of the Dissenters. We can hardly discuss this question as fully as its merits demand, without going into the whole subject of the Education Act, and this we shall certainly not attempt to do in these pages. That this Act has disappointed a certain portion of the Non-

conformists, and that they have succeeded in arousing a very formidable opposition to it, are points upon which there can be no difference of opinion. Nor are we concerned to deny the possibility of their having some ground of complaint as to the working of this measure. But when they attack Mr. Forster, when they hurl at him the epithets which were used so freely by the Manchester Conference, and which had previously been used by some of the more obscure provincial papers, we beg leave to tell them that they commit one of those blunders which are so bad as to amount to crimes.

Mr. Forster is a Liberal, a sound Liberal, a conscientious Liberal. No one who has read his speeches with discrimination, no one who has studied his course in Parliament, will doubt this fact. His Radicalism, if it does not lead him to Mr. Henry Fawcett's eccentric excesses, and if it differs entirely from the narrow and uncompromising creed of Mr. George Dixon, is what passed three years ago for very extreme Radicalism, and is fairly entitled to pass, even in 1872, for Liberalism of a very advanced shade. The great difference, however, between Mr. Forster and his present detractors lies in the fact that he is intensely practical. All through his political career he has given proof of this.

Even in his most advanced opinions, he admits the good that is to be found on the other side of the question; and when he has a piece of constructive legislation in hand, he is willing to take his materials from any quarter in which they may be found. He does not refuse to avail himself of assistance because that assistance may chance to come from the Con-

servative side of the House. He has a certain work to do, and he seeks to do it in the best possible way, bending everything, his own prejudices and feelings included, to the task which he has in hand. This, of course, is what we hear denounced by ardent gentlemen of either school in politics as the pernicious system of compromise. But what would you have? Is there to be no compromise in politics? Are 'first principles' to rule everything, from the form of a constitution to the nature of a tax? Let it be remembered by these gentlemen, who go up and down the country hurling their anathemas at those statesmen who will not sacrifice everything to their own particular views—and it matters not whether you call those views crotchets or principles—that the world is not made afresh every time a Ministry is changed. England, as it now is, is the product of centuries of labour and suffering; and although it undoubtedly contains many long-standing abuses, and some characterised violations of great principles upon which we are all agreed, these things have been so bound up with that which is good in the national life, that you cannot destroy one without seriously injuring the other.

An enthusiast, a dreamer, or fanatic may sweep his hand round the horizon, and cry, 'Let all these things be levelled with the ground.' But a statesman will smile at the presumptuous folly of which such a man would be guilty. These things exist; we are not responsible for their existence; they have been handed down to us from remote ages; they cannot be destroyed without inflicting grave suffering and injury upon the nation. Is it not, therefore, the duty of the statesman to make the best of them? No doubt they

will perish some day ; but at present they cannot be destroyed ; and is he not a wise man who, acknowledging their existence, actually turns them to good account in the performance of a work the need of which is pressing and great ? Whilst the French engineers were tunnelling Mont Cenis, Mr. Fell made a railroad over it. That was compromise ; and it is because a Liberal statesman has ventured to make a compromise of this kind, that he is assailed with the violent abuse which the Nonconformists are now pouring upon Mr. Forster. We say once more, that never was anything more undeserved than Mr. Forster's unpopularity with these persons.

But whilst he is thus suffering, as we believe only temporarily, under the ban of some of his old supporters, there is ample evidence that his position in the House of Commons has been in no respect damaged by the agitation at Manchester. The words we have quoted from an old opinion expressed respecting him are still true. In Parliament he is fortunate enough to enjoy the esteem of Conservatives as well as Liberals, and to have the ear of the House to a greater extent than almost any other Minister, except Mr. Gladstone.

How has it come to pass that Mr. Forster holds such a position in Parliament, in spite of the violent abuse showered on him out of doors ? Not assuredly because he is connected with any of our great governing families, or because he has been through a long course of public life the faithful friend and ally of some Whig statesman. There is hardly anyone in the House of Commons who could lay less claim to these advantages—if they are advantages—than Mr. Forster. He

is the son of a minister of the Society of Friends, a gentleman who was distinguished during a long life by his works of practical benevolence, and who died whilst travelling on an Anti-Slavery mission in the United States. He is, it is true, the son-in-law of Dr. Arnold ; but Dr. Arnold's influence, vast though it has been, has not, we need scarcely say, been in the direction of the Senate. Furthermore, Mr. Forster is, or until a very recent period was, a Yorkshire mill-owner and manufacturer. His residence is in that lovely valley of the Wharf, the beauties of which Turner was so fond of studying and reproducing, and his place of business is in the crowded streets of Bradford, a town with the staple industry of which the Vice-President of the Council is intimately acquainted. It can hardly be said, therefore, that it is to any accident of birth or social influence that Mr. Forster owes the position he has gained in the political world. He is a Yorkshire millowner, and professes to be little more.

Nor can it be said that it is to any remarkable gift of eloquence that he is indebted for the high rank he has already taken. Mr. Forster can hardly be said to be an eloquent man. His speeches, though they are usually clear and powerful, are not adorned by any rhetorical graces, nor are they lightened by any play of imagination. They are the plain unvarnished statement of honest opinions, arrived at after a due weighing of all sides of the question upon which those opinions have had to be formed. They have nothing of the literary beauty attaching to Mr. Bright's orations, nor have they the elasticity, the grace, and the eloquence for which Mr. Gladstone's speeches are remarkable.

Mr. Forster was, moreover, a notable man in Parliament before he gained the opportunity of making a reputation as a statesman. Long ere he was allowed to introduce measures of his own, or to sit in the Cabinet, he had gained a place in the esteem of his fellow-members that was in every way enviable. It seems to us that it was to his general character and reputation, and to the marked ability he had shown in his criticisms on some public affairs, that he was indebted for this place.

Before he had sat many years in the House of Commons, he had succeeded in establishing for himself not only a reputation for ability but for fairness. It was this eminent fairness and impartiality which did so much to gain for him that popularity which he now enjoys. His fairness was, however, something very different from the cold-blooded judicial attitude assumed by Lord Derby, or the veneering of suavity worn by Lord Granville. It was rather the generous fairness of an outspoken English gentleman, who feels the utmost confidence in the perfect righteousness of his own views upon any and every subject, and who is prepared to maintain those views at all costs against all comers, but who has at the same time a gentlemanly respect and even liking for honest opponents, and who is quite ready to admit that, though his own views are the best, there may be something in the views of other people which deserves consideration.

There is in fact a bluff and frank good-nature in the manner in which Mr. Forster deals with his opponents, which does more to conquer them than torrents of declamation or the most ingeniously designed

strategy. The House of Commons, as a whole, rejoices as much in meeting a fair and generous opponent as any individual member would do, and accordingly Mr. Forster, who deals out to both sides of the House a courtesy, somewhat rough of speech it is true, but always fairly divided between both parties, finds himself one of those enviable men who are popular with everybody.

Before he had established a position for himself at St. Stephen's, however, Mr. Forster held no mean place at Bradford, of which town he was one of the parliamentary representatives. The right honourable gentleman always speaks with something akin to enthusiasm when he mentions Bradford in the House of Commons, and Bradford returns the compliment by greeting him with overflowing enthusiasm whenever he appears in its midst for the purpose of addressing his constituents.

It seems to us that the Yorkshire borough could hardly have a more suitable representative than Mr. Forster. The strong, sturdy common sense of the people of that district, their inherent love of fair play, their ambition, and their energy, are all fitly represented in Mr. Forster. It is a sight worth seeing when the right honourable gentleman addresses a meeting of his fellow-townsmen in St. George's Hall, and it vividly recalls to mind the triumphs enjoyed by Mr. Bright whenever he makes his appearance in the Free Trade Hall at Manchester, or the Town Hall at Birmingham. It is apparent the moment Mr. Forster appears upon the platform that the most perfect confidence and mutual good-will exists between member and constituents. The latter cheer him with a hearti-

ness which speaks volumes on behalf of the soundness of their Liberalism and their lungs, and the former responds to the greeting he thus receives by making a speech, in which he disburdens himself to his friends with a freedom and a frankness which must cause him to be the envy of more cautious statesmen.

Let it not be supposed, however, that in the frankness which leads Mr. Forster to tell his constituents exactly what he thinks about the prospects of any particular policy in which his party is engaged, without regard to the consideration whether his opinions are likely to encourage his friends or the reverse, he ever falls into the mistake of saying too much. On the contrary, his very openness and frankness save him from the traps into which more cautious men are apt to fall. Thus Mr. Forster has never been known to reveal a ministerial secret prematurely. Indeed, when he became a member of the Government he told his constituents, with the utmost straightforwardness, that they must not expect him to tell them everything; that he would tell them all that he could in fairness, but that there were certain topics upon which his tongue must henceforth be tied, and that much as he would like to speak upon these topics, he could not do so.

His constituents, being sensible Yorkshiremen, accepted this frank apology as a compliment rather than otherwise, and thus it is that Mr. Forster, though a member of the present Administration, and holding an important position in it, enjoys the delightful privilege of talking as freely as any independent member to his constituents upon most topics, and is allowed by them to say just as much or as little as he

likes upon the other topics with which he is immediately concerned in his official capacity. His mode of securing this privilege by a frank confession of the disabilities under which a member of any Government necessarily labours, was a happy instance of the tact which has ever distinguished him throughout his public life.

His speeches themselves, whether made at Bradford among the sturdy Yorkshiremen who have so long supported him, or in the House of Commons to a colder and more critical audience, are always well worth studying. They are not, as we have said, eloquent after the manner of Mr. Bright's or Mr. Gladstone's eloquence ; nor do they sparkle with brilliant epigrams, or with polished sarcasm like Mr. Disraeli's speeches. They are somewhat rough-hewn in shape. It is quite clear that they have been carefully thought out beforehand ; but it is equally clear that they have not undergone the polishing process which results in the highest form of oration, in which every thought which the speaker intends to express is conveyed in the clearest and at the same time in the most beautiful language. Nevertheless these speeches are always remarkable for their lucidity, for the freshness and originality of the views which they contain, for their vigorous and racy comments upon the passing events of the day, for their clever and comprehensive forecasts of future events, and for their spirit of courtesy and fairness towards all who are the speaker's political opponents.

Gradually the merits of Mr. Forster's Bradford speeches have become more and more apparent to the world at a distance ; gradually they have received

a larger and yet larger amount of attention on the part of metropolitan critics and the general public, until it has at last come to be admitted that there are not many reviews of the political events of the day better worth listening to, and certainly not many from which more can be learned, than those which Mr. Forster periodically delivers in the town which he represents in Parliament. As to his speeches in the House of Commons, they have, up to a comparatively recent period, been speeches from which it was impossible to augur much. They have always been favourably received, and have always deserved the attention bestowed upon them; but a subordinate member of an administration, or an independent member, unless he holds a high rank in the House, has not many chances of distinguishing himself as a speaker.

His speech in introducing the Education measure deserves to be noted as a masterpiece of clear and persuasive exposition. It followed but a few days after that wonderful address in which Mr. Gladstone made the intricacies of the Irish Land Bill as simple and intelligible as the Multiplication Table. Most men would have shrunk nervously from the comparison which could not fail to be suggested under the circumstances between the two speeches. Mr. Forster was not free from the nervousness; but he nevertheless gave no chance to the most invidious critics to draw odious comparisons between himself and Mr. Gladstone. Without making the slightest attempt to secure oratorical effect, he quietly and deliberately stated to the House the provisions of his bill, in language which nobody could misunderstand. When

he sat down it seemed for the moment that he had achieved one of the greatest parliamentary triumphs of modern times. Everybody was captivated by his exposition of the measure, and on the one side of the House leading members of the Conservative party, and on the other influential Radicals, joined in congratulating Mr. Forster upon the masterly manner in which he had solved the great problem of the day.

We know that since then some of his own friends have seen fit to alter their opinions, and that the views taken by a section of the Liberals with regard to Mr. Forster's bill have been considerably modified under pressure from without. Still this does not alter the fact that in the first instance his proposals were hailed as the most successful attempt to settle the educational difficulty which had ever been made, and that the speech in which those proposals were stated was of itself a model of lucid and simple exposition. He conducted the subsequent parliamentary skirmishes on the question with tact, temper and discretion.

As for Mr. Forster's future, it seems to us that the more his present position is studied the more brilliant will that future seem. The House of Commons has the warmest regard for the strongminded Yorkshire member, who can combine the most perfect fairness to his opponents with the most earnest attachment to the principles which he himself professes, and who has never during his parliamentary career made a single unnecessary enemy. Though there is this great difference at present between the Vice-President of the Council and the more extreme members of the Radical party, the links which bind them together are

too strong easily to be severed ; and there seems reason to hope that when the present breeze has blown over, Mr. Forster and the Radicals will once more work together in unabated harmony. There is no one, even among those most bitterly opposed to the Education Act, who would attempt to dispute the fact that upon the whole Mr. Forster is the very best educational minister we could have. The entire freedom from sectarian prejudices which has long distinguished him ; the fairness with which he is in the habit of acting towards the members of all creeds and parties ; and the admirable common sense, the readiness of resource, and the fertility of invention, which are among his characteristics, all point him out as being above most men suitable for the post which he now occupies.

It is seldom, indeed, that by training, by sympathy, by experience, and by the peculiar bent of his powers, any man is so admirably fitted for a post in the service of the public, as Mr. Forster is for that which he fills in the present Cabinet.

It must not be supposed that Mr. Forster's career is likely to stop short in consequence of the Nonconformist revolt. No one who knows the right hon. gentleman can doubt that his ambition goes much further than any post he has yet filled. He feels within himself the capacity for even higher things than those which occupy his attention as Minister of Education, and we believe that he does not exaggerate his own powers when he aims—as he obviously does—at a much higher position.

Whether he will ever now be the Liberal leader is possibly open to doubt. To us it seems, however,

that no other member of his party can hope to compete with him successfully. Compared with most of the men who might compete with him, he has on his side the crowning advantages of comparative youth and of popularity. He is still in the very prime of life, and he has succeeded in winning for himself a foremost place in the esteem and confidence of nearly all parties in the House of Commons. Under these circumstances we are inclined to think that men are not rash who express their belief that, if he is spared, the right hon. gentleman who now represents Bradford in the House of Commons will become Prime Minister of England. There is most assuredly no one in his own rank in Parliament whose chances of obtaining that distinction would be preferred to his. Much, of course, depends upon himself; but, judging by the past, we see no reason why in that future day, when those who are now at the head of affairs have departed, Mr. Forster should not appear as the leader of the new generation, and enter upon a far higher career of statesmanship than any which he has yet attempted. Even as it is, however, he deserves our attention as a thoroughly noticeable man—one of the most noticeable, indeed, of those who are now seated upon the Treasury Bench.





MR. NEWDEGATE.

MR. NEWDEGATE holds a curious position in the House of Commons. It is one which it would be impossible to define in a single sentence, and to which even in much more extended limits it is difficult to do justice. He is the Protestant champion. All the world is acquainted with that fact, and all England knows what labours he has undertaken in the cause of that Church of which he is so devoted a member.

But unfortunately the title of Protestant Champion belongs to many men of very different character and calibre from Mr. Newdegate. Take, for instance, that other Protestant champion of the House of Commons, Mr. Whalley. We do not go so far as the unkind people who solemnly declared their conviction that Mr. Whalley was a Jesuit in disguise, though we must acknowledge that we have known of no Jesuits who have done more harm to the cause of orthodox Protestantism than that which has been done to that cause by the erratic member for Peterborough. No one who has seen the exhibitions which this hon. gentleman is in the habit of making in the House of Commons, the curious compound of ideas which he appears to entertain, and the extravagant manner in which he supports any of the claims he may feel it his

duty to advance, can fail to acknowledge that if he is a fair type of the Protestant champions, then the fewer persons of that order there are in the world the better will it be for Protestantism.

There is again the Protestant champion of the type to be met with occasionally in Scotland—gentlemen of the class which supports the ‘Bulwark’—who would apparently, if they were allowed to have their own way in the matter, find exquisite pleasure in retaliating upon all Roman Catholics those tortures and punishments which in less happy days the Protestants of the United Kingdom had to suffer at the hands of their Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen.

There are other Protestant champions still lower in grade than these—men to whom it is unnecessary that we should allude by name, but who manage to support the claims of Protestantism at the expense of those of morality and of common decency. But it is to none of these orders that Mr. Newdegate belongs. There is no more earnest or enthusiastic Protestant in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless Mr. Newdegate would not desire to launch torrents of Billingsgate at the head of any Catholic member who ventured to oppose him; nor would he wish to see that member dragged forth into the New Palace Yard and there given to the flames; nor, above all, would he like to treat the House of Commons to a course of instruction in the ‘Confessional Unmasked,’ or in any other work of an equally edifying nature.

Mr. Newdegate, in short, is a Protestant and a Protestant champion, but he is at the same time a gentleman, and he never forgets that there is a right and a wrong way of doing all things, and that the

right way is that which it is in every sense wiser to adopt. Accordingly, although he occasionally deals very hard blows at his Roman Catholic fellow-members in the House, and at his Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen generally, he is yet remarkably successful in retaining the respect of all men.

Even hot-blooded Irish gentlemen, roused to a state of fever-heat by what they consider an insult to their religion, will go out of their way to express their conviction that Mr. Newdegate is personally an amiable and excellent man, and that in what he is doing he is actuated by the best of motives; whilst by the House at large, though he may not find his views very generally sympathised with, Mr. Newdegate is always treated with a certain amount of respect which only attaches to men who have earned the esteem of Parliament by the strictest personal honour and consistency.

We do not pretend to say that Mr. Newdegate always takes the wisest course in his proceedings with respect to Romanism. On the contrary, even those who are as staunchly attached to the Protestant Church as he himself is, but who have succeeded in keeping free from the turbid currents of theological controversy, are often grieved by the lengths to which he pushes his antagonism to Rome. But it is at least certain that in all that he does he acts up to the very letter of his own view of what is honourable; and that even in the fiercest moments of debate, when those religious passions are roused which burn more fiercely and are more difficult to quench than any other passions, he never permits himself to use language which is not strictly gentlemanly towards his opponent.

There is something about Mr. Newdegate's manner when speaking so strangely formal and solemn that it has acquired for him a peculiar fame in the House of Commons. To begin with, although Mr. Newdegate is in private life a most genial gentleman, and although he is known and admired in the Midland counties more as a devoted fox-hunter than as the champion of Protestantism, he seems to think it right to assume a most funereal air whenever he enters the House of Commons. His face as a rule wears so lugubrious an aspect, that the title of Knight of the Doleful Countenance has been applied to him with singular appropriateness ; and when he speaks his voice is suggestive of a reading from the Burial Service rather than of any more enlivening piece of elocution. Despite these serious drawbacks, the hon. gentleman is not without a keen sense of the humorous, and he is frequently in the habit of giving utterance to sly pièces of humour, which are made all the more irresistible by the speaker's solemn face and tone.

Mr. Newdegate adopts a stately as well as a solemn style when he addresses the House. The 'Saturday Review' once observed that he was the last man who maintained the traditions of the style of the elocution-master, and it must be confessed that there is some truth in the statement. The carefully modulated voice, the scrupulously appropriate gestures, and the gathering climax of the peroration, all call to mind the orators of a past day. Mr. Newdegate must have studied those orators carefully when he was a youth, for he succeeds in producing in the House of Commons in 1872 an exact copy of the style of oratory

which was universally adopted in Parliament forty years ago.

Few things are more amusing than to watch the hon. gentleman when he is engaged in hot controversy with some Irish members upon some question connected with his favourite, his all-absorbing theme. There is something almost pathetic in the pitying patience with which he allows his opponent not only to speak without interruption from himself, but to interrupt him when it is his own turn to address the House. The consciousness of undoubted right is printed upon every feature of his subdued and solemn face, as he courteously gives way in order to allow some gentleman opposite to make an explanation which he has no right whatever to offer to the House. He evidently regards his opponent more in sorrow than in anger, and feels for him rather as the misguided dupe of mischievous delusions than as being anything more objectionable.

There is but one person in the House of Commons for whom Mr. Newdegate entertains a less charitable feeling. That person is the redoubtable Mr. Whalley. Few men who were present in the House during the session of 1869, when that famous scene of mutual accusation and recrimination took place between the member for North Warwickshire and the member for Peterborough, will forget the incident. It is true that the House treated the affair as an exquisite joke, and watched its progress amidst shouts of laughter. But it was at Mr. Whalley and not at Mr. Newdegate that it laughed. For the latter, indeed, no one could feel anything but pity, and few things were in their way more pathetic than the manner in which he

taxed Mr. Whalley with having done his best to destroy the very cause which he professed to be anxious to promote. It was Mr. Whalley's thick-skinned insensibility to the shafts of Mr. Newdegate's satire which roused the laughter of the House, and led to a scene which has not had many parallels in Parliament. Up to that time the twin champions of Protestantism had been cold strangers, ever since they have been open foes.

A few years ago it was Mr. Newdegate's lot to win a most unexpected victory. He had given notice of his intention to move for the appointment of a committee to enquire into the condition of conventual institutions in Great Britain. When the night came on on which that motion was to be brought before the House, he was allowed to bring it to the vote almost unopposed, for apparently all the members of the Roman Catholic party were satisfied with the assurance that the Government intended to oppose the motion on its own account and that its fate was therefore sealed. Strange to say, however, the Ministry was put into a minority, the whips not having calculated upon the strength of the Protestant feeling on their own side of the House. It was curious to see how Mr. Newdegate's face flushed with delight when he found that after years of discouragement and defeat he had at last obtained a substantial triumph. Equally pleasant was it to see the manner in which he responded to the warm congratulations he received from his friends near him when he resumed his seat. He had achieved a victory of no mean description, and he must have felt that, after all, the exertions of his life had not been in vain.

It is not everybody that has Mr. Newdegate's earnestness of feeling with regard to ecclesiastical matters, and there are doubtless many persons who will view his excess of zeal with disapprobation rather than otherwise; nevertheless, all must admit that if a Protestant champion is a desirable functionary in the House of Commons—and who will deny that proposition?—we could hardly have that position better filled than it is by the member for North Warwickshire.





SIR ROUNDELL PALMER.

SIR ROUNDELL PALMER'S great act of self-sacrifice, when he stepped aside from the highest honours of his profession rather than violate his conscience by aiding Mr. Gladstone in the disestablishment of the Irish Church, has given him a hold on public esteem—one might almost say on public affection—such as is held by no other politician.

This act was by no means unprecedented in itself. Many a man in humbler walks of life than that which Sir Roundell Palmer treads has made great sacrifices for the sake of conscience, and has had no reward save the approving smile of that conscience to compensate him for all that he has given up. Nay, it is possible that conscience itself has not dealt kindly with him despite his sacrifice to it, and he may have been tormented by eager self-questionings as to whether what he had done was after all the right thing to do, and whether he had not in his very self-denial committed a greater error than that from which he had sought to escape.

It must not be supposed, therefore, that Sir Roundell Palmer's rejection of the woollen sack, when the offer of it was accompanied by the requirement of a pledge to aid in the disestablishment of the Irish Church,

was in itself a supereminently virtuous act. But unfortunately it was an act of the rarest kind, so far as political life is concerned. It is so seldom, so very seldom, that men who have made politics their business, and who are active figures in that bustling realm of compromise where the government of the nation is carried on, are capable of sacrificing self to principle, that it is not difficult to understand the thrill of genuine admiration which ran around all classes of politicians when it was found that there was at least one virtuous man amongst their number. Sir Roundell Palmer had actually preferred retirement from the race, in which he was about to win the great prize, to the violation of his conscience. The annals of St. Stephen's hardly could contain a parallel case.

Since he made this sacrifice the great liberal lawyer has unquestionably received some consolations which are by no means to be despised. We say nothing of the approval of his own conscience, because that is a point with which we have absolutely nothing to do; but we refer to the fact that he has not only won golden opinions from people of all ranks and creeds and classes, but has taken a much higher position in Parliament than that which he before occupied. He has ceased to be looked upon as a mere party man, and his opinion now carries with it a weight to which it once could lay no claim. Upon many subjects, indeed, his judgment is supreme, and he has but to lend his influence upon such subjects to one side or the other, in order to cause victory to declare itself upon that side which has the advantage of his support.

A grave, elderly man, of subdued and even melancholy appearance, blessed with a marvellous command

of language, and with a clear, musical voice, which is at times almost feminine in its special characteristics, such is Sir Roundell Palmer. The silken softness of his voice is not, indeed, the only feminine characteristic about him ; for all who know him must feel that there is much that is almost womanly in his temper and character.

He has that deep reverence for religion which belongs rather to the woman than to the man. He has a tenderness of feeling and a command of pathos which are in themselves essentially womanly ; and he has moreover, it must be confessed, just that slight tinge of jealousy in his personal disposition which is essentially characteristic of the truest and best of women, which Thackeray, for instance, makes so prominent a trait in the mother of Pendennis. Let it not be supposed, however, that allied to these feminine traits there is any weakness of intellect. On the contrary, Sir Roundell Palmer's mind is one of the very highest order. It is the mind at once of a lawyer and a statesman, and can command at the same time the subtlest niceties of argument and the broadest and most comprehensive of principles.

As a lawyer we need hardly say that the member for Richmond has attained a success of the very highest degree. There is no one at present at the Chancery Bar who commands so large a practice as that which he enjoys, and fabulous stories are told both of the amount of the fee which must be paid in order to secure his services, and of the total sum which he earns every year. Clients appear to labour under the belief that their cases are more certain of success in Sir Roundell Palmer's hands than in those

of any other man, and he is accordingly loaded with an amount of work which he must assuredly find it difficult to keep pace with.

It need hardly be said that the life of a successful Chancery barrister is one of the most laborious which any man can undertake, and as Sir Roundell Palmer is the most successful of all Chancery barristers now in practice, it will be readily understood that his labours are almost incalculable in their extent. It must be confessed that it is at times difficult for the outsider who strolls into one of the hot little Courts in the neighbourhood of Chancery Lane, where Sir Roundell Palmer practises, to understand altogether the cause of his remarkable popularity as a counsel. He has a graceful and fluent style of speaking, which, though it is not unpleasant to listen to, can hardly be called impressive, and even becomes in course of time monotonous. He has, moreover, such a power of uttering words that he can involve the simplest point of law in a haze of language which will effectually conceal it from all but the keenest of intellects.

It is upon record that on one occasion Sir Roundell, having been addressing a certain learned judge without a pause from ten in the morning until two in the afternoon, and being still apparently as far from an end of his speaking as ever, was interrupted by the Court with the words, 'It would be a great assistance to us, Sir Roundell, if you would state what your point is.' Some of our readers may be inclined to think that the man who could talk for four hours without enlightening his audience as to the special point at which he wished to arrive must of necessity be a man of inferior intellectual capacity. The contrary,

however, is the case. No man can be clearer or more concise than Sir Roundell Palmer when it is necessary to be so ; but the reader will readily understand that there are times when the ability of counsel to hide the real point of a case beneath volumes of words is of the highest value to his clients. In accomplishing this feat there is no man at the bar who can be compared to Sir Roundell Palmer.

Not contented with his tremendous labours in Court, and with that political work to which we shall refer presently, Sir Roundell, it is well known, engages in various literary pursuits—by way, we presume, of recruiting himself after his professional avocations. One of the most earnest of living Churchmen, he has in many ways shown his devotion to the Church of England, and has made many sacrifices on her behalf, besides that great sacrifice of the woosack, to which we have already alluded. It is but a short time, indeed, since he bought an estate, in a pleasant district in the South of England, for the purpose of erecting a residence for himself upon it ; but finding that a church was needed for the district in which the estate is situated, he proceeded to build one before he allowed a single stone of his own house to be reared.

But it is in his literary work that he is most popularly identified with the cause of religion. His admirable 'Book of Praise' is known to everybody, and is perhaps the best collection of hymns in the English language. It is curious, indeed, to see such a work prepared under the care of such a man ; and, amongst the 'curiosities of literature' with which posterity will interest itself, will be the spectacle presented by the great Chancery barrister and the eminent Member of

Parliament, carefully weighing the rival merits of hymns by Watts, and Wesley, and Toplady, and comparing them with scrupulous exactness before deciding which were, and which were not, fit for admission to his collection. The traditions associated with the great men of former days, whose fame still clings to Lincoln's Inn and Westminster, are hardly traditions which have any intimate connection with hymnology.

We must pass on, however, to see Sir Roundell as a politician. Who that frequents the House of Commons has not seen him driving down to the great door of Westminster Hall of an afternoon in a Hansom, and stepping forth from it carrying that bulky blue bag, which contains the briefs submitted to him that day? What does Sir Roundell do with those briefs, and when does he read them? You may see him presently leave the House, when it is thinning at the dinner-hour, and again disappear in a Hansom, still clinging to the blue bag and its contents.

But just now as he enters the House, you may observe how careworn he is, and how deep on face and temples are the lines produced by the terrible labours which he constantly undergoes. He has come direct from his chambers, or from the court where he has been pleading, and he has already gone through an amount of labour more than sufficient to weigh down many strong men. Yet he immediately takes his seat in his accustomed place in the House of Commons, directly behind Mr. Gladstone, and sits there silent and attentive for hours, whilst any subject in which he is interested is being discussed. When he rises with any other man, the cry of the House is almost sure to

be 'Palmer, Palmer,' and then you have the opportunity of hearing him, in his sweet musical voice, laying down the law of the matter if it be a legal question, or expressing his personal opinion on it if it be a matter of more general interest, with an authority such as is enjoyed by few other independent members. At times he rises to genuine eloquence in his speeches ; it is, however, rather the eloquence of deep feeling than of powerful expression. On such an occasion as his admirable speech on the subject of the deplorable murders in Greece, for instance, he showed at once not only an almost passionate emotion in himself, but the power of stirring the feelings of others to a remarkable degree ; whilst his reply to Mr. Miall, on the motion in favour of the disestablishment of the English Church, was regarded by his friends as one of his greatest triumphs.

With all that womanly tenderness which distinguishes him, however, and which has won for him the warm respect and esteem of the Members of the House of Commons, Sir Roundell Palmer is not a man who is by any means pliable in his disposition, or who can be relied upon to do a good turn to a party or an individual out of mere good nature. No man who makes conscience the strict rule of his life can do this ; for if principle is his supreme master, it will not permit him to sacrifice it to the mere desire of making things pleasant for others. The result is, that whilst Sir Roundell Palmer professes to be, and unquestionably is, a Liberal, he has on many occasions seriously embarrassed the course of the party with which he generally acts. It matters nothing to him that the view he takes of a question is not the view

which is held by his party ; if the matter be one involving principle, he will uphold his own view of it to the very last.

There was a story told a few years ago to the effect that in consequence of the course which had been taken by Sir Roundell Palmer on the Irish Church question, he and Mr. Gladstone had broken off a friendship of many years' duration. There was not, of course, a word of truth in the ridiculous rumour. The truth is, that both Sir Roundell Palmer and Mr. Gladstone have far too high a respect for their own consciences to take offence with each other for obeying the dictates of those consciences. No one who knows anything of Mr. Gladstone will doubt that he is a man who makes principle the rule of his conduct ; and though it is unquestionably true that his views and his principles undergo much more rapid changes than those of many men, that is to be attributed to his personal idiosyncrasy rather than to any insincerity of character.

The truth is that the leader of the Liberal party appears to be more closely bound to his somewhat erratic follower by the very eccentricities of his conduct than repelled by them. And Sir Roundell, upon the whole, is a thoroughly staunch Liberal. Upon ecclesiastical and quasi-ecclesiastical questions his views are essentially Conservative—as has often been shown. But upon all matters connected with ordinary politics, he is quite abreast of his party.

No one can doubt that his great talents and his consistency will find their proper reward before long. Again and again of late have rumours of the approaching retirement of Lord Hatherley been heard coupled

with intimations that his place will be filled by Sir Roundell Palmer. All that we can say is that when Mr. Gladstone has the woolsack again at his disposal, Sir Roundell Palmer will once more be, as he was upon the last occasion, the first man to whom he will offer it. That the great lawyer will be a valuable addition to the House of Lords, few persons will doubt ; but it is just as certain that his removal would be a great loss to the House of Commons. Still, one must earnestly wish to see this event take place, for Sir Roundell Palmer's own sake. Not that he will gain any greatly increased honour by being raised to the peerage, but that he will be ensured that rest from his labours which he needs so much, and which at present he seems so little disposed to take.





LORD LYTTON.

IT is not often that the House of Lords is favoured with the presence of its great statesman-novelist. Sometimes for a whole session, we believe, Lord Lytton never appears at all ; and as a rule he only shows himself a few times during the chief debates. Yet, when he does make his appearance in the distinguished assemblage of which he is now a member, he is beyond all question the most remarkable-looking man seated upon the peers' benches.

Not even Lord Derby, with his massive Roman face, or Lord Granville, on whose countenance shines all the urbanity of the French statesman, or Lord Grey, whose shrewd sagacity and irritable temper are visibly depicted in his eyes and mouth, can draw the attention of the stranger away from Lord Lytton when the latter is in his place. His face has been described by some as resembling the eagle ; by others it has been likened to the hawk. We don't pretend to be able to say whether it approaches most nearly to eagle or hawk ; but no one who has seen it with its two glittering eyes, and its long beak-like nose, can wonder that men should have sought some simile for it amongst the birds.

Remarkable is the effect which this face produces when it is seen in the midst of a mass of the common-place countenances ordinarily to be seen in the House of Lords. It stands out with a distinctness which is positively startling. It seems as though it refused to mingle with the other constituents of the scene—as though there was nothing in common between it and ordinary faces. The eye passing over the rows of crowded benches on a great debate cannot pass over that countenance. Instinctively it rests upon it, and the mind feels that it is looking upon a man who is in every way exceptional.

Never during the time that he has occupied a seat in the House of Lords, has Lord Lytton spoken before that assemblage. Once, indeed, we almost heard him. It was during the debate on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill. At the close of one of the evening's debates, Lord Lytton and Lord Grey rose together. The cries for Lord Lytton were general from all sides of the House, and Lord Grey was compelled to resume his seat. According to custom, Lord Lytton then moved the adjournment of the debate, in order to secure the first place in the discussion of the following evening. When that evening came, the House filled early, in the hope that a speech from the great literary peer was about to be listened to, and amongst those present were some of the most eminent authors of the day; but when the clerk of the table 'called on' the renewed debate, to the disappointment and dismay of everybody, Lord Grey, and not Lord Lytton, rose. The Northumbrian Earl had, it appears, in the interval between the adjournment and the renewal of the

discussion, induced Lord Lytton to give way to him, and in this manner the House of Lords lost the treat to which it had looked forward.

A great treat it would have been ; for Lord Lytton, though like his brother, the late Lord Dalling, he suffers to an almost painful extent from physical weakness, is nevertheless one of the most brilliant orators who have appeared on the Parliamentary arena during the last thirty years. His speeches sparkle with that brilliant and polished wit which shines in his works, and they have moreover that flow of eloquent words which, though it may be somewhat incongruous in a printed book, is certainly not out of place in a spoken address.

It must be a long time now since Lord Lytton made his maiden speech in the House of Commons. One of the literary and social chroniclers of that day has left on record some account of the anxiety with which it was looked forward to by the brilliant set of wits and dandies in which Lord Lytton was at that time the brightest star. 'He can do everything else, but he can never make a speech,' said one of his friends. Indeed it seemed difficult to believe that this man, who had shown himself able to produce plays, poems, and romances, all of sufficient merit to secure a high place in English literature, should also be able to command by his eloquence the great political assemblage of which he had become a member.

But when the hour of trial came he passed successfully through it. He made a speech which showed that he was something more than a great author—that he had within him the faculties of a

great statesman also. It is singular indeed that the same party in the House of Commons should have included amongst its members at the same time two such men as Sir Bulwer Lytton and Mr. Disraeli. Both these men are great authors ; both are great orators ; both are great statesmen. To Lytton belongs, beyond all question, the literary faculty ; to Disraeli the higher political ability. But each possesses the two qualities to an extent which makes him an exceptional phenomenon even amongst great men.

Of Lord Lytton the author this is not the place to speak at any length. He has gained a position amongst the first of English literary men, and the abundant honours which have been showered upon him, not only in England, but all over Europe, prove how highly his genius is appreciated by the generation in which he lives. Were we engaged in writing a literary criticism, we confess that we should enjoy nothing more than to trace the gradual development of the powers and opinions of the writer from the time when he produced 'Pelham,' to the very day when he wrote the last line of his 'Strange Story.' He has, we know, been sneered at by many men who have never accomplished a tithe of the good work which he has done, but who, blind to the genuine merit of his novels, and open only to their defects, imagine that they have summed up his literary reputation when they have dubbed him 'the Inventor of the Beautiful with a big B.' We are not going to enter the lists in defence of Lord Lytton's style, which most people will acknowledge to be at times meretricious ; but we cannot conceive how any one

possessing even the smallest share of the critical faculty, can fall into the ridiculous error of allowing the mere eccentricities of style which distinguish the author, to hide the brilliant genius which shines through all his works.

It is not only as the artistic novelist, however, that Lord Lytton has won high distinction in literature. He has left hardly any branch of literature untouched, and all that he has touched he has adorned. At fifteen he gave to the world his first poem, 'Ismael,' and since that time he has added to the poetical literature of his country some works for the future of which we need have no fear. In history he took many years ago a position which showed what he was capable of doing in that department, if he had chosen to pursue it; whilst as a dramatist, he has given the English stage some of its most brilliant comedies. It seems as we pursue his history, indeed, as though he were capable of doing well in every department which he chose to touch; and his marvellous readiness, his gift of improvisation, if we may so term it, in whatever work he undertakes, is not less wonderful than the power and genius which he constantly displays.

We have but to take by way of example the brilliant addresses which he has delivered on the several occasions on which he has assumed the honorary positions which have been conferred upon him in connection with many of the literary and educational institutions of the country. All these addresses, although full of noble thoughts expressed in eloquent language, were thrown off with almost as much ease as that which Mr. Gladstone displays when he winds up a debate; and of one of the most remarkable of them it is said

that it was entirely composed in the train whilst its illustrious author was travelling down to Glasgow to deliver it. When we see a man thus strangely gifted, we need not wonder at the fact that he fairly dazzled the eyes of the generation which first knew him, and that in his younger days it was believed that he was destined to attain a place, not amongst the great men of his own day only, but amongst the deathless great men of all time. That he has not fully realised all the expectations formed with regard to him, he himself would, we presume, be the first to acknowledge. Splendid as is the reputation which he has achieved, and high the rank which he has taken, he has nevertheless fallen short of the mark which he might have gained. He is not *the* great man of the day; and there was a time when the best judges believed that he was capable of becoming this.

It is not for us to enquire into all the causes which have led to this partial failure in a great career. Ill-health, which is now, we fear, confirmed, has unquestionably had much to do with it; and perhaps the very extent of his genius, which led him to wander over many fields instead of devoting himself to the cultivation of one, has not been without its share in bringing about the result. Be this as it may, no one who knows Lord Lytton will deny that the influence which he has exercised upon his contemporaries, great though it has been, and the place which he has earned in the temple of fame, splendid though it is, are not equal to the expectations which were justly formed with respect to him.

Of Lord Lytton the politician, we have little to say. His political career bears a somewhat marked resem-

blance to that of one or two of the other most distinguished members of the party to which he belongs. He began his political life, in 1831, as the Liberal member for St. Ives, and for many years, in Parliament and out of it, he was a consistent supporter of the Liberal party. In 1851, however, he published that famous 'Letter to John Bull, Esquire,' which attracted so much attention, and in 1852 he found a place upon the Conservative benches. Since that time he has been the consistent supporter of Conservative measures.

In 1858 he had the honour of being selected by Lord Derby to take the post of Secretary for the Colonies in his administration. It was then shown that the novelist, the poet, the dramatist, the historian, and the orator, could all be merged in the statesman ; for during Sir Edward Lytton's tenure of the colonial office, he displayed an amount of administrative ability which showed that he was capable of taking as high a rank in political life as most of his contemporaries. Had his health served him, and had he cared for the struggles of the Parliamentary arena, he might have commanded office on his own terms from any succeeding Conservative administration. But he had made up his mind to retire from active public life when Lord Derby was called to office in 1866, and one of the first acts of the Prime Minister was accordingly to give effect to the universal esteem in which the ex-Colonial Secretary was held, by raising him to the House of Lords, with the title of Baron Lytton.



THE LATE EARL OF DERBY.

No incident of the Irish Church debate of 1869 was more dramatic than the speech delivered during the discussion in the House of Lords on the second reading of the bill by the Earl of Derby. No one who heard that speech can forget the scene amidst which it was delivered. It was on the third night of the memorable debate that Lord Derby rose to address the House of Lords. The House was crowded in every part by our hereditary legislators ; one looked along the benches on either side without missing a single noticeable face. Every peer of the realm whose name is familiar to his countrymen, from the Prince of Wales downwards, was present. In the narrow gallery running round the solemn gilded chamber on a level with the upper tier of windows, were assembled many of our best-known peeresses, whose light summer toilettes made the gloomy hall look unusually bright and cheerful. On the steps of the throne, divided by a narrow rail from the House itself, stood a crowd of members of the House of Commons, and of peers' eldest sons. Amongst these, Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Lowe were all to be found ; and all were waiting with the keenest anxiety

for the opening sentences of Lord Derby's speech. In one of the little tribunes at the back of the gallery, devoted to members of the House of Commons who are not Privy Councillors, sat the man who may perhaps be accounted the hero of the Irish Church question—Sir Roundell Palmer. The assemblage as a whole was, perhaps, the most brilliant in rank, in intellect, and in power, ever gathered together during the lifetime of one generation.

It was in the midst of this assemblage that there rose from a place on the front bench to the left of the woolsack, an elderly man. No one could look at the figure which stood at the table for a moment, silent and even apparently embarrassed, without being struck by it. The upright frame—upright in spite of weakness, evidently due as much to severe illness as to years—the prominent and striking features, the thin grey hair, brushed back from a noble forehead, and the commanding attitude of the head, made up a picture not easily to be forgotten. Few as they looked at it could doubt that the old man before them was not the least among the nobles of England, and none who heard him when he began to speak could question the fact that he had in his day been a singularly elegant and powerful public speaker.

Of the matter of Lord Derby's speech upon this occasion, except only the closing sentence, we do not propose to speak here. The manner of its delivery was, however, singularly touching throughout. The curse upon Ellangowan, which the Earl recited from the pages of Scott, was delivered with almost perfect dramatic force and power; the rugged Scotch dialect being rendered with the closest fidelity, and the manner

of the speaker, as he poured out the terrible words of warning and denunciation, having something about it of the weird pathos of an ancient prophet, calling down maledictions upon the head of his persecutor from amongst the ruins of his former home. But there was nothing weird, though there was much, very much, that was touching, in the closing passage of this remarkable speech. Lord Derby spoke in that passage of his age, his frailty, his evident nearness to the grave, and then in a manner, the haughty and defiant pride of which called to mind some of the most memorable episodes of his earlier career, he told the crowded assemblage which hung upon his words, that to his dying day it would be a source of pleasure to him to have been enabled to lift up his voice upon that occasion, against a measure which he believed to be fraught with injustice, and big with peril to his country.

With that speech one of the most remarkable political careers of the century may be said to have been brought to a close.

Few of the characters which it has been the lot of the present generation to study upon the stage of public life have presented more striking features than those belonging to Lord Derby. He is not known as the wisest statesman of our time; he has never indeed aspired to a reputation for marked political wisdom. His name is hardly identified with any of the great measures which stand out in undisputed prominence upon the pages of the statute-book, though, as a matter of fact, his share in some of the most important efforts of modern legislation has been much larger than is generally acknowledged. Nor has he

for more than a generation been connected with what is known as the popular party in the State.

From the first moment of his public life he has never been chargeable with courting the applause of the multitude ; nor has he once during his long career shrunk from uttering his unreserved opinions upon matters on which he knew that the majority of his countrymen were opposed to him. And yet, in spite of all these things, few men have been more popular than the fourteenth Earl of Derby. Even in Lancashire, where the Manchester school has its stronghold, nobody has been able to attract to himself a larger share of the affection and esteem of the cotton operatives than the great Tory peer.

The fiercest Radicals in that county have been loud in their praises of the man who, though he believed that it was his mission to stem the tide of democracy, was yet the constant and generous friend of the toiling multitude. No better proof of the power which his name carried with it in his native county could be desired than that which was afforded by the result of the North Lancashire election of 1868, when his son, a young and comparatively untried man, succeeded in wresting a seat from the Marquis of Hartington, despite the immense territorial influence which the latter could command.

In society, too, Lord Derby has enjoyed a position which, it may be said without exaggeration, has been filled by no one since the death of the Duke of Wellington. Not even Lord Palmerston, with his marvellous personal power over politicians of all parties, enjoyed so much of the esteem, the admiration, nay, almost the worship of the upper classes, as that which

belonged to Lord Derby. He was not only the leader of a party, but the undisputed master of the House of Lords. He led the nobility of England ; and again and again have the proudest and noblest of his opponents in the Upper Chamber been compelled to bend before the influence of his magic sway, and to own that they were powerless in opposition to him.

As for his own party they followed Lord Derby with the unswerving devotion with which, in the ages of chivalry, a prince's vassals followed their master. There have been, as all the world knows, contentions and disagreements in the Conservative camp. At one time it even seemed not impossible that the party might be split into two great sections ; but not once during these dissensions was a single word of disloyalty towards Lord Derby heard from either side. So long as he enjoyed the vigour of bodily health, he was able to maintain in his party the most perfect discipline which it was possible to desire ; and it was a discipline founded, not upon the domination of an arrogant intellect, but upon the affectionate confidence which the rank and file felt in their leader. It was not until his long public career was drawing to a close, and he was making no attempt to conceal the fact that the duties forced upon him by his country were irksome in the extreme, that his influence in the councils of his party began to decrease. But even to the last his personal following was the strongest which in modern times any political leader has been able to command.

And how was it that a man, who, as we have shown, had none of the ordinary political qualities which command enthusiastic support like that which

he enjoyed, was yet able to occupy such a position in public life.

We have said that Lord Derby could never lay claim to the possession of sagacity as a statesman. He was, however, more admirably qualified to be a party leader than almost any other man of his time. He had those personal qualities which at all times command the respect of foes and the affection of friends. Nothing throughout his whole life was more remarkable than his unvarying fidelity to his party.

Lord Derby has repeatedly been taunted with inconsistency, because, like every other man of common wisdom, he has allowed his opinions to grow with the growth of the age. But, in one thing, at least, his consistency can never have been challenged. He never left his followers in an awkward dilemma; he never lacked 'the courage of his opinions;' he never showed political cowardice. It never mattered to him that the battle he has had to fight was often a losing one. 'I like,' said he, during his last session in the House of Lords, 'I like to be upon the losing side.' A mere party battle, indeed, was nothing to him, unless, in waging it, he could feel some of that stern joy which the man of the highest courage experiences when he knows that the odds are against him. The breath of the world's idle applause, the songs and shouts of victory, were nothing and less than nothing to him.

To be the leader of a chosen few, who shared his feelings and his opinions, and who trusted themselves to his guidance, and to see before him an arrogant majority, waiting for his attack much as the Philis-

tine giant waited for the advance of the Hebrew shepherd lad—these were the things in which Lord Derby seemed to find the highest pleasure. He knew no fear; he acknowledged no defeat. Given a cause, which, rightly or wrongly, from the bottom of his heart, he believed to be founded upon right and justice, and he would fight for that cause, though he stood alone against the whole world. It was this heroic courage which had not a little to do with the devotion of his followers. Few people indeed could resist the fascination which a man of this stamp exercises over those around him. Even when, as was sometimes the case, his own partisans doubted the wisdom of the steps which he might be taking, they were fairly carried away by the fearless bearing and heroic resolve of their leader.

All the world knows that he was called the Rupert of Debate. He had earned the title, and he was proud of it. He liked to be compared to the dashing cavalier whose brilliant charges carried fear and dismay into the ranks of the foe. And no one who has watched his public life can deny that there was a very marked resemblance between the two men. Lord Derby's political actions were not only brave and resolute; but they were dazzling and brilliant. They had, in fact, those qualities which arise from an equal admixture of genius and of valour. To strategy, as strategy, he never stooped. It would have been positively painful to him to have had to resort to a mere ambushade in order to obtain a victory over the foe. All that he did was done in the open field. Sometimes, indeed, his attacks were almost insolent in their daring. He would charge

the assembled Liberal peers single-handed, without a moment's hesitation ; and it is a noticeable fact that not a few of his most brilliant victories were gained in this manner. Thus it was that his followers looked up to him with the admiration and devotion which the rank and file of an army always feel for a commander who is cast in this heroic mould. They worshipped him even more in defeat than in success.

His eloquence, too, was one of the happy gifts which enabled him to sustain his position at the head of his party. Few men will deny that he was one of the best speakers of his day. His oratory had not the massive grandeur which characterises that of Mr. Bright ; nor was it capable of the lofty and sustained flights which that of Mr. Gladstone often takes. But it was always vigorous, always graceful, always clear. It was full of happy illustrations and of apt quotations. Its satire was always easy and polished ; it was studded with epigrams, which appeared, for the most part, to be the *impromptu* offspring of the moment, and, at times, it showed powers both of pathos and invective which were hardly to be met with in the speeches of any of his contemporaries.

As a debater, the Earl was undisputed master of the House of Lords. He had at all times so ready a command of arguments, and could always express them in such terse and telling language, that he was never unready when a sudden storm disturbed the usually serene atmosphere of the upper chamber. Let those who can recall the sharp contests of wit and rhetoric which have again and again taken place

between Lord Derby and Lord Russell in later days, and between Lord Derby and the Duke of Newcastle or Lord Granville in earlier times, bear testimony to the fact, that, in these tussles, the great Conservative Earl was almost uniformly victorious. Many of his sharp sayings, evidently uttered without forethought, have been carefully treasured up, and have now become part of our language. One, only, of these sayings need be quoted—his description of Lord Russell's foreign policy as a system of 'meddle and muddle.' As a specimen of the vigour of his oratorical powers up to the latest moment of his public life, as well as a touching memorial of the part he took in the great conflict of the last year of his life, we may transcribe the closing sentences of the speech to which we have already alluded, on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill :—

'My Lords,' said he, 'I am now an old man, and, like many of your Lordships, past the allotted span of threescore years and ten. My official life is at an end, my political life is nearly closed, and in the course of nature my natural life cannot be long. That natural life commenced at the period of the great rebellion in Ireland which immediately preceded the union between the two countries. God grant that it may not close with the renewal of rebellion! My Lords, I do not pretend to foretell the distant future. But, whatever may be the result of your Lordship's consideration of this measure, for my own part, if it be for the last time I now have the honour of addressing your Lordships, I declare that it will be to my dying day a satisfaction that I have been able to lift my voice against the adoption of a

measure, the impolicy of which is only equalled by its moral iniquity.'

But few things contributed more to Lord Derby's control over his party than his own birth and lineage. The representative of one of the oldest and noblest of English families, the heir of one of the most splendid estates in the country, he was eminently fitted to be the leader of the aristocracy of his native land. All his instincts were their instincts, his very prejudices were those most dear to the hearts of his own class. If he lacked the cold and clear judgment of the statesman, he had that which in some measure atoned for it—the quick instinctive feelings of an English gentleman.

No one who knew Lord Derby could ever dream that he would at any time be false to his order, or to his country. No one ever doubted that amidst all the vicissitudes and chances of public life, the honour of his sovereign and of his native land would still be as dear to him as his own honour. The very position which it was his lot to occupy, first as heir and afterwards as owner, of the stately demesne of Knowsley, and all the broad lands attaching to the Earldom of Derby, was of itself sufficient to render him a safe guide to the aristocracy of his country. Weighted by the honours and the riches which it was his good fortune to enjoy, it was hardly possible for him to stray aside from the path of safety. It might easily, however, have been that his position should have had such an effect upon his character, as to contract his sympathies, and make him the great divider of classes in the country where he wielded such enormous power.

But allied to his aristocratic feelings and prejudices was a noble chivalry of character, not unworthy of one who was the descendant of so many gallant knights, which led him at all times to extend a protecting arm over the multitude. He hated democracy with a fierce hatred that was almost insane, but he was at all times ready to show the most generous consideration towards the poor. He had, in fact, the feelings of a feudal chief, who whilst maintaining with the most rigorous impartiality all the rights and privileges of his own order, yet acknowledged that he had special duties to perform towards the orders beneath him, and was at all times ready to perform those duties in the most liberal manner.

The world has seen some noblemen who have been staunch Liberals in politics, but who in private life have unfortunately been the reverse of liberal. Lord Derby, though the most Conservative of statesmen, was personally the most liberal of men. It is not necessary to dwell upon any special acts of his, in his dealings with his fellow men, but the great part he took in the relief of the sufferers in his own country during the time of the Cotton Famine will always be gratefully remembered in Lancashire, and it can hardly be doubted that it had no small political results.

Haughty, quick-tempered, and often rash of speech, Lord Derby undoubtedly was. He had committed during his long public life many mistakes; he had uttered many sayings which had no sooner fallen from his lips than they were repented of; but repentance came so quickly after the fault, and was always accompanied by confession so candid, and reparation

so ample, that one can but say of him that 'e'en his failings leant to virtue's side.' Nor can we wonder that one who had at his command so much ample debating power, and who was for so many years mixed up with the heat of party conflict, should at times have made use of language which occasioned pain to others. In his day he had been the object of O'Connell's fiercest abuse—he had enjoyed the honour of being called 'shave-beggar,' by the great Dan—and from O'Connell's days down to our own, he has been in the thick of every political battle which the country has seen waged. He was thus trained as it were against his will in the arts of invective and abuse; but often as he was led into indiscretions in the heat of party warfare, he was always ready afterwards with that ample explanation which more than anything else in the political conflict, may be said to turn away wrath.

Thus it happened that both in the House of Commons and the House of Lords, the Earl of Derby has been popular with the members of both parties. His dashing onslaughts commanded the admiration even of those against whom they were directed, and he was respected and esteemed by his most determined political opponents. In all these respects, then, Lord Derby made an admirable party leader. He had courage of a rare kind; he had ready eloquence, and a lively fancy, and he had that magnanimity of character which not only secures the affections of friends, but compels the respect of opponents. And though there was often a want of caution about his movements, his quick wit, and his instinctive knowledge of the feelings of the class of

which he was so distinguished a member, did much to atone for any temporary rashness. He led the gentlemen of England, and it would have been difficult to find anywhere a man who was better qualified to perform that task.

When we come to consider the Earl's rank as an administrative statesman, we find that he shines more in general principles than in matters of detail. Lord Derby was indeed too apt to look upon the minutiae of official business with a feeling akin to impatience. He was far more of the party leader than of the administrator, and in this respect he bore a striking resemblance to the old school of English statesmen, men, who though they had the highest capacity for governing, yet looked upon the details of office as matters almost beneath their consideration ; and yet no one can forget that during his three administrations the Earl carried to a successful issue some of the most important legislative reforms which the present generation has witnessed.

It is no doubt true that the chief share in these reforms might be claimed by subordinate members of the administrations ; but Lord Derby has at least the credit of having lent his powerful assistance to them, and in many cases the acts which were done were his acts alone. The frank and immediate recognition of Louis Napoleon, for instance, after the *coup d'état*, was not only one of the most momentous and important proceedings ever taken by an English minister, but it was proof that, despite all which might be said by his detractors, Lord Derby had no lack of a keen sagacity.

At the time at which the results of the *coup d'état*

were so readily and fully recognized by the government, Louis Napoleon was universally unpopular in England, and Radical writers were even urging us to enter upon a war for the sake of avenging the wrongs suffered by French Republicanism. It was at this very time that Lord Derby had the daring to place England in such a position that from that day down to the present moment, she and France have been knit together in bonds of unbroken amity. How much we owe to the Earl for this act, an act which a man of less courage, and of a lesser degree of inflexibility, would scarcely have ventured upon, we can never know; but this at least is certain, that had he done nothing else during his whole public life, he would still have left us his debtor.

His career as an administrator was marked however by more than one remarkable success. In 1833, as a young man, it was his happy lot to propose in his official capacity as Secretary to the Colonies, that measure upon which, even now, no Englishman can look back without a thrill of pride—the act for the emancipation of the West India slaves; and as Prime Minister, the work which he accomplished in the reform of the Chancery Courts, in the establishment of the militia, in the reconstitution of the Indian Government, and in the reform of our representative system, was such as to give him a high place amongst the ranks of English statesmen.

We do not propose to attempt any sketch of his career, but we may go back to his early days, and present him to our readers as the young Minister of nearly forty years ago, as he was ‘photographed’ with pen and ink by a lively magazine writer, who has

doubtless long ago ceased to present the world with Parliamentary portraits. Here is a sketch of Lord Derby when he was plain Mr. Stanley, and Secretary for Ireland at the time of the agitation for repeal :— ‘ While his adversary is speaking he shows little self-command ; he listens with a spirit of mockery, which is not intended to be offensive, but which causes displeasure ; he turns round to his neighbouring minister, and whispers and laughs ; he tosses up his head, and exhibits a restlessness and impatience of what he considers to be either sophistry, ignorance, or absurdity ; he cannot sit for a moment in tranquillity, but alternately throws himself back or opens his knees, and putting the palms of his hands together, bends down his head, and after remaining in this attitude, suddenly recovers himself, and seems ready to spring forward to reply. This sort of Parliamentary Pantomime is not relished by the Opposition.

‘ When, however, he has got fairly on his legs, he shows an utter absence of the nervousness and susceptibility which one might have anticipated from an orator whose silence is so much on wires. With a clear, distinct voice, whose fault consists in its approach to an occasional shrillness, and with a surprising facility of neat and simple phrase, which is admirably adapted to the purposes of exposition, he takes up every argument and every fact which have been pressed on the other side, and leaves no topic and no assertion untouched. If he cannot contradict he qualifies ; if he cannot refute he embarrasses, and when he can contradict and can refute, he performs one office with asperity, and the other with derision. His gesture is

easy, graceful, unaffected, and impressive ; his attitude manly, and free from any of the artifices of deportment which Sir Robert Peel is suffered at times to employ. He has great strenuousness, and even ardour, and after having laid his antagonist prostrate, exults in his overthrow.'

Such is the sketch of Lord Derby as he appeared nearly forty years ago, and there is much in it that could be truthfully applied to his appearance in the House of Lords to the very last year of his life. As a young man, he was regarded with peculiar hatred by the Irish repealers. His 'aristocratic demeanour'—which might, one would think, have been pardoned in the heir of the Stanleys—was regarded by the ragged regiment of Irish patriots as something specially designed to insult and annoy them.

At that time of his life Lord Derby used his eyeglass constantly, and, as all the world knows, an eyeglass can be used in such a manner as to indicate not a little of the private feeling of the person who carries it. O'Connell and his tribe of relatives used literally to writhe under the quizzing they received through the glass worn by the haughty young man of 'aristocratic demeanour,' who filled the responsible post of Chief Secretary for Ireland, who despite his high birth and haughty bearing, was at all times ready to meet and conquer the most accomplished Irish debater in the House of Commons.

We have said that there are features in the portrait of Mr. Stanley of 1831, which are to be detected in the Lord Derby of 1869. There is, however, as may well be expected, a marked difference between the two. During his later years the Earl used to come

down to the House in an open carriage, and entering the building by the peers' doorway, he would hobble into the House itself with the aid of a stout oak walking-stick. The eye-glass of 1831 had been replaced by spectacles, which sat remarkably well upon his prominent Roman nose. His fine expansive forehead was hidden by the hat, which was usually pulled so far down that the brim shaded half his face. His arms were folded across his breast, and his glance turned downwards.

Occasionally during some important speech, a trace of the old restlessness would show itself; but it was seldom more than a trace. He would lift his head quickly, cast a piercing glance at the speaker, and move his lips, as though he was talking to himself. But in another instant the head would be bent down once more, and it would be difficult for the spectator to know that the Earl was not asleep. At other times he would turn towards the peer seated next him—almost invariably Lord Chelmsford—and whisper a few words in his ear; or he would beckon—though this was very rarely the case—to Lord Cairns, and having drawn him to his side, would hold a brief conference with him. Once or twice when the subject under discussion was that in which he took so deep a personal interest—the state of Ireland—he would spring to his feet, when he wished to speak, with all the impulsive haste which characterised him in his youth. When he did so, of course, whoever else might have risen at the same moment, always gave way to him; for his position in the House of Lords was one of undisputed pre-eminence. On these occasions he would dash into the discussion with some-

thing of the heat and ardour which he so often displayed in early life; and up to the last he displayed undimmed intellectual powers, and an eloquence which nothing but his physical weakness marred.

We have spoken already of his memorable speech on the second reading of the Irish Church Bill. Though the veteran statesman never showed more complete physical exhaustion than he did during the delivery of that speech, the effort was one which was not unworthy of his fame, and which certainly produced upon the audience to which it was addressed a deeper impression than almost any other speech of that great debate. As a rule, he spoke as little as possible after his retirement from office. He evidently felt his own feebleness greatly, and was very anxious to husband his resources.

Most of the peers as 'they entered, paused' at his seat, to shake hands with him; but latterly even this seemed to become an irksome task to him; and he would slip away from the House so quietly that few members knew when he had left. It seemed during the whole of his last session in Parliament that the shadow of death was upon him. More than once, after the terrible attack under which he laboured in the spring of 1868, he spoke of himself to his friends as 'a broken man,' and broken he undoubtedly was so far as his physical strength was concerned. He was indeed little more than the shadow of his former self; but his heart was still as gay and as light as when, in his earlier years, he could leave the House after an exhausting debate, upon the China question, arm-in-arm with a sporting peer, and busy in the

discussion of the chances of a favourite for the Two Thousand Guineas.

He had a pleasant laugh, a bright smile, a gentle word for all his friends. He could even indulge in playful satire towards his political opponents, and despite the agonies which the disease under which he laboured inflicted upon him, he was always cheerful and free from the moroseness and bitterness which are too often the accompaniments of severe physical pain.

That Lord Derby deserved a high place as a literary man no one who has read his translation of the 'Iliad' can deny. This translation was accomplished during the intervals of his rest from political labour, and was at first intended for private circulation only. Its singular fidelity, the scholarship which it displays, and its marked literary ability, all combine to give it a high place amongst similar works. There is one little specimen of his lighter work in translation which we venture to transcribe here. It is the 9th Ode of Book III. of Horace :—

TO LYDIA.

Horace: While I was dear to thee,
While with encircling arms
No youth preferred to me
Dared to profane thy bosom's snowy charms ;
I envied not, by thee adored,
The wealth, the bliss of Persia's lord.

*

Lydia: While all thy bosom glowed
With love for me alone,
While Lydia there abode,
Where Chloe now has fixed her hateful throne ;
Well pleased, our Roman Ilia's fame
I deemed eclipsed by Lydia's name.

Horace : 'Tis true, my captive heart
 The fair-haired Chloe sways,
 Skilled with transcendent art
 To touch the lyre, and breathe harmonious lays :
 For her my life were gladly paid
 So Heaven would spare my Cretan maid.

Lydia . My breast with fond desire
 For youthful Calais burns ;
 Touched with a mutual fire,
 The son of Ornithus my love returns ;
 For him I'd doubly die with joy,
 So Heaven would spare my Thurian boy.

Horace : What, if the former chain
 That we too rashly broke,
 We yet should weave again,
 And bow once more beneath th' accustomed yoke ?
 If Chloe's sway no more I own,
 And Lydia fill the vacant throne ?

Lydia : Though bright as morning-star
 My Calais' beaming brow ;
 Though more inconstant far,
 And easier chafed than Adria's billows thou ;
 With thee my life I'd gladly spend,
 Content with thee that life to end.

What the Earl was as a sportsman, we need not say. He belonged, however, to that best class of the patrons of the turf, the men who regarded sport as a pastime not as a profession ; and when he saw how terrible were the effects of gambling upon the turf on many of the younger members of the aristocracy, he did not hesitate to sacrifice his own inclinations, and withdraw from a pursuit in which he set an example which proved to be a mischievous one in the case of others. Often indiscreet and impetuous, when we have said this much we have really mentioned his

worst faults. Undoubtedly he was one of the most remarkable figures in the arena of politics, and those who remember him, who knew him, who often heard him speak, may think with satisfaction that they have known almost the last member of a great race—for Lord Derby belonged essentially to a past school of statesmen, and had but little in common with the men who surrounded him and succeeded him.





THE LATE EARL OF CLARENDON.*

It is, as we all know, a great thing to be wise ; but, failing the actual possession of wisdom, the next best thing is unquestionably to look wise. You may not be very witty or very eloquent, or very profound ; but, providing you know when to hold your tongue, and nod your head like Burleigh, the world will certainly give you credit for being much wiser than you are.

Now whether the Right Hon. George Villiers, fourth Earl of Clarendon, is really a wise man many persons are inclined to doubt. The noble Earl has his enemies and detractors like other men ; and even all of those who admire the cool patrician skill with which he can manage a difficult negotiation, are not inclined to give him credit for having those sterling qualities of mind which are as much needed in diplomacy as in any other branch of the business of life. Nevertheless, there is one point upon which friends and foes must alike agree, and that is, that Lord Clarendon is upon the whole the wisest-looking man in the House of Lords.

The Earl's face is a mask—a mask which speaks in every wrinkle, in every line, in the simper which plays around the mouth, and in the strange twinkle of the

eyes—of an unfathomable store of wisdom and of cunning hidden behind that weather-beaten countenance. You have but to look at my Lord Clarendon in order to pick him out as the fittest man in the House of Lords to conduct the foreign relations of England upon the old system of diplomacy. You have but to watch the play of those mobile features in order to see how perfect a master the man is of the arts of political fence, with what an easy grace he would meet an awkward question by—shall we call it an evasion?—and how calm and how unruffled he would be in the conflict of diplomacy, when an exciting crisis had been reached, and tempers were moved, and little bits of ‘the true mind’ of the chess-players with whom he was contending were being brought to light.

In such a crisis as that you can imagine Lord Clarendon, with the ever-present simper playing blandly over the yellow, wrinkled face, and the cold grey eyes coolly watching each movement of the foe, gaining triumphs which men of thrice his intellectual capacity might sigh for in vain. He is worth looking at, moreover, as a specimen of the school of diplomatists which is fast passing away, and which will soon, let us hope, be gone altogether. His patrician air, his courtly manner, the brilliant moral courage which enables him to disregard obligations which would fetter more scrupulous men, combine to make him a perfect type of the aristocratic diplomatist who in his time has played so large a part in the affairs of Europe.

Can you wonder at his being the most popular diplomatist in the world? Lord Clarendon has never

been inoculated with the ideas of the new school which the present generation has seen rise in things diplomatic. He would never forget for a moment the etiquette which surrounds a throne, or the charm which may be found in a persuasive and conciliatory manner ; and he would shrink from the dangerous doctrines which have been preached of late years in the matter of nationalities and of intervention and non-intervention, with a horror which would perhaps be more real than anything else about him.

Very different is the bearing of the noble Earl from that of his great friend and ally Lord Russell. Where the one is fussy, noisy, and disagreeable, the other is calm, silent, and bland. Where Lord Russell would write ten despatches Lord Clarendon would write one ; and in ten of Lord Clarendon's despatches less of the real mind of the writer would be shown than in one of Lord Russell's. Very different, too, is Lord Clarendon from his noble connection Lord Derby. The veteran Earl can hardly fail to regard with dismay the absence of diplomatic reticence by which his predecessor at the Foreign Office is distinguished. Under his rule Mr. Reverdy Johnson would never have concluded the famous convention which has unfortunately settled nothing. The wily old gentleman who in his seventieth year takes a more active part in public business than many a worn-out young peer of three-and-thirty, would never have believed in Mr. Reverdy Johnson. He would have listened graciously to all that the too-famous Maryland lawyer had to say to him ; he would have accepted with a pleasant smile those oily blandishments in which the American minister dealt so largely, and he would

have taken Mr. Reverdy Johnson's measure at the same moment, and have recognised his promises and professions at their true value.

So far, of course, this is to Lord Clarendon's credit: but, upon the other hand, there was the possibility, nay, there was the probability, that the United States might have accepted Mr. Reverdy Johnson's settlement of the Alabama dispute. Had Lord Clarendon been in office instead of Lord Stanley, however, when that convention was proposed, the United States' Government would never have been afforded the chance of accepting it. The Earl abides by the old order of things, and has no idea of abandoning the paths in which he has so long walked, in favour of those which the modern race of diplomatists is beginning to affect.

Four times has Lord Clarendon been Foreign Secretary, and the present is the sixth Cabinet in which he has occupied a leading post. In addition to the office which he now fills, he has been Lord Privy Seal, President of the Board of Trade, and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. For nearly half-a-century, he has taken part in the diplomatic service of the country, his name is known in every court in Europe, and in Ireland he is possibly too well known as having been for five years of unexampled misery and depression, Viceroy of the country.

He has thus held some of the most important posts which any statesman can fill, and has for nearly fifty years been amongst the favoured few whose lot it is to 'mould a mighty state's decrees, and shape the whispers of a throne.' And whilst he has enjoyed the political power attaching to such a position, his

personal influence has been hardly less note-worthy. Descended from the brother of the famous George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and from the equally famous Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, who was the grandfather of two English queens, the Earl is a Grand Seigneur of the first type of his order, entitled by his rank, his wealth, and his family connections, to the social and personal influence which belongs only to a few amongst us.

It is just fifty years since the veteran diplomatist commenced his public career ; for it was in 1820 that he was sent to St. Petersburg as attaché to the embassy there. It was eleven years later, however, before Mr. Villiers was entrusted with any post of importance. In 1831 he was sent to Paris to arrange certain fiscal and other matters, the arrangement being dignified by the name of a commercial treaty, for at that time it need hardly be said that English politicians and diplomatists had no idea of the possibility of such a commercial treaty as that which was subsequently concluded between the French and English Governments, through the agency of Mr. Cobden.

Seven years after this time, in December, 1838, Mr. Villiers succeeded his uncle in the earldom of Clarendon. He was at that time the English minister at Madrid, but upon succeeding to the title he immediately sent in his resignation of the post he was holding, and returning to England, took his seat in the House of Lords. Hitherto Lord Clarendon had been merely a diplomatist, and nothing more. Now he became one of the active politicians of the day. Fitted by nearly twenty years of life as

a member of the diplomatic profession for the still larger arena upon which he had entered, and endowed with the manifold gifts of fortune—in the shape of wealth, rank, and influential connections—at which we have hinted, he was soon enabled to take a leading position in the House of Lords. Ere he had been for twelve months a member of that assembly, he was invited by the then Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, to join the Ministry with a seat in the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal. He did so, and thus commenced a political career which has upon the whole been one of the most evenly successful of any which the present generation has witnessed.

A few months after he became Lord Privy Seal the Earl was transferred to the post of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and this office he retained until the autumn of 1841, when the Whig ministry resigned, and Sir Robert Peel accepted office. Five stormy and eventful years in the history of England followed, and it was not until 1846 that Lord Clarendon was again permitted to taste those sweets of office which are supposed to be peculiarly grateful to the Whig palate.

Upon this occasion, however, he was not chosen for one of those ornamental posts which he had hitherto held. Lord John Russell had recognised the shrewdness of the ex-Minister to Spain, and he entrusted to him the important post of President of the Board of Trade. That post was in 1846 one of peculiar importance, for the commercial revolution effected by the repeal of the Corn Laws had imposed upon the Board of Trade many special duties. Lord Clarendon discharged those duties with marked

ability, and at the end of twelve months he was promoted to the still more important post of Viceroy of Ireland.

That he was not popular with the Irish people during his term of office cannot, we venture to say, be said to be any discredit to the Earl of Clarendon. He had to deal with Ireland during one of the worst epochs in its history. In addition to the disaffection of which we have seen so many indications of late years, Ireland was at that time suffering from the most abject poverty, and her starving people had absolutely no prospect before them but death or emigration. It would be too much to say that Lord Clarendon did all that might have been expected of him at this difficult crisis in Irish history. Nay, it is unquestionable, that despite the considerable reputation he had achieved in the House of Lords, he did not accomplish his task as satisfactorily as it might have been accomplished by many statesmen of less repute. The truth is that at that period in its history, Ireland did not want diplomatic cunning and shrewdness; it wanted bread. It did not need the simpering politeness of a courtier, but it did need the generous sympathy of a friend. Lord Clarendon did his best in Ireland, 'according to his light,' but the case was one which a Talleyrand himself would have failed to treat with success.

If Lord Clarendon failed to conciliate the people of Ireland, however, he certainly won an increased reputation at home. Two years after his arrival at the Castle at Dublin he was made a Knight of the Garter, in recognition of his services to the Government and the Crown, and when he returned to

England, in 1852, he found himself occupying a still higher position in the House of Lords than he had previously held. For just one year the noble Earl was out of office, the time being during Lord Derby's first premiership. Then Lord Aberdeen came in at the head of the famous Coalition Ministry, and Lord Clarendon was for the first time placed in the position which he has so often since occupied, and entrusted with the charge of the Foreign affairs of the country.

The Coalition Government continued in existence for two momentous years, and during those two years England entered upon the Crimean War. Could Lord Clarendon have saved us from the terrible blunders which culminated in the winter campaign before Sebastopol? We do not pretend to answer the question, but it is at least certain that more than one of the gentlemen who are now his colleagues believe that he could have done so.

Mr. Bright, for instance, in more than one of those wonderful orations with which he at once electrified and enraged the House of Commons during the days of the Crimean War, made several attacks upon the noble Secretary for Foreign Affairs. 'Lord Clarendon has told us,' he once remarked with a bitter sneer, 'that Europe was standing on a mine, and did not know it. I do not know that he is much more acute than other people, but I can fancy that Lord Clarendon, by the blunders of his negotiations, and the alliances he has endeavoured to form, has placed this country on a mine far more dangerous and destructive than that upon which he thinks Europe was placed by the colossal power of Russia.'

It will thus be seen that Lord Clarendon's diplo-

matic efforts, during the troublous times in which he entered upon the charge of the Foreign Office, were not universally appreciated. Nothing, however, discredits diplomacy like war, and it is only natural that it should be so, since the first object of diplomacy ought to be to keep us out of war.

Nevertheless, whether Lord Clarendon managed his department well or ill during the two years from February, 1853, to February, 1855, whilst Lord Aberdeen presided over the Coalition Ministry, he was at least successful in securing such a position for himself that when the Coalition was broken up—had fled away howling to the back benches at the first sight of the David who came forth to attack it with sling and stone, to adopt Mr. Bright's metaphor—and when Lord Palmerston had been called upon to take the head of affairs, Lord Clarendon retained his post as Foreign Secretary. Nay, during the short interregnum in which Lord Derby was vainly endeavouring in 1855 to form a ministry, Lord Clarendon received from the noble Earl the offer of the place he had held under Lord Aberdeen.

It thus came to pass that the Earl of Clarendon was Foreign Secretary when the Paris Conference of 1856 was held. At that Conference he represented England. How he represented it we need hardly say. The most ardent of his admirers will at least admit that there were some things in his conduct of which they had reason to disapprove. At that famous gathering of plenipotentiaries, craftiness met craftiness, and our English diplomatist found his match. Possibly, it was out of simple complaisance, and from a desire to make himself agreeable on what he considered a small matter, that he took a part

which was hardly creditable to an English statesman, with respect to the press of Belgium; but no such excuse can be offered for his failure to secure for England upon the great points in dispute such terms as she was fairly entitled to.

Lord Clarendon came back from Paris with damaged plumage. He had been in the fight, and he had failed to come out of it with the honours of the day. But what would you have? Somebody must be beaten at the council board as well as on the field of battle, and, after all, Lord Clarendon succumbed to influences against which the ordinary resources of diplomacy provided no defence. He was beaten more by his allies than his enemies. Nevertheless we must remember this incident in the Earl's career, and it cannot be forgotten by those who wish to show where he won his triumphs, and what were his failures.

Until February, 1858, Lord Clarendon continued to hold his post as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, under Lord Palmerston, and it was not until he had occupied that important office for exactly five years that he had again to pass into opposition. For eighteen months he assumed the part of a critic, and for the most part let us say, in passing, of a very fair and moderate critic of a foreign policy, of which he was not the head; then Lord Palmerston came back to office. Strange to say, however, when he did so he did not summon Lord Clarendon at once to his aid. Many were the reasons given for his not doing so. It is unnecessary that we should dwell upon those reasons, or seek to eliminate the truth from the gossip of the day. It is enough to say, that for nearly five years, during which time Lord

Russell was at the head of foreign affairs, Lord Clarendon continued out of office. Then he became Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in April, 1864, a change consequent upon the premature death of the Duke of Newcastle.

This ornamental post he continued to hold until the death of Lord Palmerston, in the autumn of the following year. Then Lord Russell was given to us as Prime Minister once more, and was in consequence compelled to relinquish the seals of the Foreign Office. There was but one man possible in Lord Russell's place, and that was the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, who, accordingly, for the third time entered upon the charge of our foreign affairs, and continued to fulfil that charge until the defeat of the Russell administration in the summer of 1866.

The defeat of the Liberal party upon that memorable occasion arose upon the question of Reform, and it is to be taken at once as a compliment to Lord Clarendon's ability as a diplomatist, and as a proof of Lord Derby's opinion of the views which he entertained with regard to the Reform Question, that the Conservative leader, when he was called upon to form an administration for a second time invited the Whig Foreign Secretary to retain office under him. For a second time he was met with a refusal. Lord Clarendon passed into opposition with his friends; but when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, in December, 1868, the noble Earl at once returned to the Foreign Office, and there he has ever since remained.

A rapid sketch of Lord Clarendon's career, like

this, affords little room for any detailed criticism upon his foreign policy, or rather upon the manner in which he has carried out the foreign policy of the different governments of which he has been a member. We have pointed out one notable instance in which it is generally admitted that Lord Clarendon failed; it would be decidedly unfair, however, to deny that there are other instances in which he has achieved a very marked success.

For instance, we saw in his reply to Mr. Secretary Fish, on the Alabama Question, a fair specimen of the cool, gentlemanly fashion in which he can handle an opponent, and without apparently resorting to any excessive exertion on his own part, leave his antagonist prostrate on the field. We have spoken of the favour which Lord Clarendon enjoys in the eye of more than one European sovereign. The leaders of the courts and governments of the Continent never succeeded in understanding Lord Stanley's policy; they could not comprehend the possibility of a man who was the representative of a great nation, assuming a judicial attitude, rather than one proper to an advocate. The consequence was, that the old-fashioned diplomatists were not a little afraid of the member for King's Lynn; they never knew what his next move might be; and the careless frankness with which he revealed his hopes and fears was far more terrible to them than any amount of Machiavellian reserve and duplicity would have been.

But the Earl of Clarendon is one of themselves. He plays the 'high chess game' according to the old rules. He loves the same principles, and follows the

same precedents as those upon which they themselves act. They do not find fault with him if he occasionally succeeds in performing some adroit little manœuvre which gains an advantage for England at the expense of another power. The move has been made in strict accordance with the prescribed rules and regulations of the game in which they are all engaged.

And on the other hand, they are never puzzled by any doubts as to a possible excess of scrupulousness on his part, which might induce him to adopt some strange and unexpected policy in any negotiation in which they were engaged. They take his reserve, his frankness, his smiles, his charming courtesy, and his cool indifference, for being worth just as much as, and no more than, the same things are worth in themselves, and it is only speaking the truth to say that they are seldom, if ever, deceived in their calculations.

Well, if the relations of a country with its neighbours are still to be conducted upon the time-honoured principle which has so long held good amongst us, if each power is to treat every other power as its natural enemy, if all are to do their best to outwit and to deceive everybody else, if the first rule of diplomacy is to be secrecy, and the second duplicity, and if each nation is to act upon the assumption that all other nations are ruled by knaves, who are to be trusted no further than they can be seen, we have in the Right Honourable the Earl of Clarendon a fair Foreign Secretary. It is quite possible that he may occasionally meet more than his match: he did so at Paris. But, on the

other hand, he is just as likely to overmatch somebody else.

So long, therefore, as the foreign policy of every nation is to be a policy of overreaching, we can hardly do better than entrust our foreign affairs to this preternaturally wise-looking old gentleman, whose head is crammed with the records of half-a-century's intrigues on the part of every Court in Europe; who is as intimately acquainted with the leading men of foreign powers as with the members of our own House of Lords; who is 'up' to every move and every shuffle in the great game which he has played so long, and who has acquired a certain easy dexterity in the management of that game by a practice which had commenced before most of us were born. You may search England in vain ere you will discover a Foreign Minister of the old stamp who will compare with Lord Clarendon.

But are we never to advance beyond the present system? Are the honour of kings, the happiness of nations, the lives of millions of human beings, to be for ever confided to the keeping of a score of crafty politicians, who think it no shame to dupe, and to deceive, to shirk engagements, retreat from solemn undertakings, and abandon pledges, if by so doing they fancy they can advance the particular policy which they have in view? It may be that we must for ever continue to march upon the old lines, and trust to the old safeguards.

England has, however, seen at least the first faint indications of a brighter day,—a day in which honour and good faith, and a wholesome frankness and publicity shall belong as much to public as to private

affairs. The present Earl of Derby has shown us that we do not abandon all our bulwarks when we consent occasionally to transact our business with foreign powers upon the same principles as those which we adopt in transacting our business with our friends and our commercial associates.

We have had other instances of the diplomatic triumphs which may be achieved without the aid of what the world calls diplomacy, through simple earnestness, and mutual honour and integrity. Surely we may hope that the day may come in which a better 'foreign policy' may prevail amongst all nations than that which now finds favour with them; in which we shall not appeal in vain to the sense of justice entertained by our neighbours, near or distant, and in which the communications of one Government with another will be conducted by some simpler and safer process than the secret channels of foreign offices, and the 'cyphers' of diplomatic correspondence. It may be a dream to hope that such a change will ever take place; but should that change be accomplished, we shall have taken the first step, and not an inconsiderable one, towards that 'federation of mankind' for which the enthusiasts of all ages have longed and prayed.

But, to return to Lord Clarendon, we cannot close this sketch without noticing one singular circumstance in connection with the position which he at present occupies. It is the Earl's extreme unpopularity with a large section of the party with which he has for so many years consistently acted. Dislike is a mild word with which to describe the feeling entertained towards Lord Clarendon by the Radicals.

There are men now in the Ministry of which Lord Clarendon is one of the most prominent members, who boil with indignation whenever the name of the Foreign Secretary is mentioned, and it is well known to those who are acquainted with the secret history of the Liberal party during the last two years, that Mr. Gladstone was fiercely blamed by some of his colleagues for entrusting the Foreign Office to him.

The cause of this antipathy is undoubtedly to be found in the position which Lord Clarendon occupies in relation to domestic politics. He is of the Whigs, Whiggish—a Whig, indeed, of the purest blood. No man in the House of Lords has less sympathy with the growing demands of democracy than the Earl of Clarendon, and none views with a colder or more cynical spirit the progress of those great popular movements which every country in Europe has of late years had to witness. The Conservative element is strong in his nature, and he would, if he could, keep the Foreign Office in much the same state as that in which it was when he first became acquainted with diplomatic secrets, fifty years ago.

LONDON, *October*, 1872.

A

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